

SISTERS

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The staff section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
If you oppose sex discrimination in jobs, in pay, in opportunity

JOIN TASS

Don't let the employers organise you out of equal pay
and equal opportunities. Legislation will not be enough.

YOU NEED
ORGANISATION
NEGOTIATION

As well as legislation.
Write for application, or organise a meeting.
Contact: Judith Hunt, National Womens Officer, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, Technical Administrative and Supervisory Section, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey.

spare Rib

October 1976

Cover Mary O'Connor photographed by Chris Davies

has been forced to move to bigger premises at 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 from October 1st.

Can you help us with building, painting, furnishing, plumbing and making it generally habitable as we will simultaneously be working on the next issue.

Contact Rose at 437 2070 or 439 1674 as soon as possible.

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Spare Rib is produced collectively by Rose Ades, Anny Brackx, Alison Fell, Victoria Green, Wisty Hoyland, Susan Lambert, Laura Margolis, Jill Nicholls, Rozsika Parker, Linda Phillips, Jane Prince, Eleanor Stephens.

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Cut Up Selected Men

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,

Things are pretty bad here in South Africa. The recent riots have shaken everybody up.

Whites are regarding blacks in a new light; they seem to be waking up to the realisation that there are 20 million of them as opposed to four million whites, but very little meaningful change is being made, and people who work for change against the government are being incarcerated.

It is very difficult to reach out as feminists to disenfranchised South African women, because they have been rendered so totally helpless by the system, i.e. all the means to help themselves or to protest are closed to them, even between middle class blacks (and there are few enough of them) and middle class whites there is a huge gulf — the blacks are deprived culturally, educationally and as far as work goes there is no upward mobility and even money cannot buy it in this country.

And now since the riots — though the press has been told to play it down (we know that there are constant flare-ups all over the country) — it is very risky to go into the black townships and visit black 'friends'.

Personally I have become even more aware of being surrounded by enemies than ever before. Being totally anti the nationalist government, and having been involved in protests against them with students and the Black Sash (a group of women who have been publicly protesting for about 15 years now), I am afraid of the Security Branch coming down on my head. At the same time, being fully aware of black anger, I am afraid of the blacks. Being a victim of gang rape (by blacks) and having studied the rape problem I am afraid of men.

I am, with 17 women, all at various levels of feminist consciousness, doing a course in self-defence.

I have often fantasised about working off my fear and anger by creating an organisation which would cut up selected men, but I will probably work off my anger by teaching other frightened women self-defence.

Yours in sisterhood
B. Clarke
South Africa

PS I am a lesbian and live with another lesbian in a house which has become a feminist resource centre, because of all the books and papers we have collected.

Struck By Contrast

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,

Whilst I totally support Joyce Buchan's attempts (*Letters, SR49*) to bring to the notice of the Equal Opportunities Commission the sexual discrimination practised in the Central Bar of Aberdeen, I cannot help feeling that the following letter (*'Home Truths' from A. Cooper*) really struck at the heart of sexual discrimination.

I am sure that nobody could fail to be struck by the contrast between these two letters. On the one hand, one section of the female population are liberated to the extent that they *can* protest about injustices experienced. This group of women are sufficiently aware of the system to be able to use it, and invariably, have firm and supportive relationships, to be able to stand by their beliefs in the face of opposition or ridicule.

The other section are so hampered by external responsibilities and restrictive relationships that they have neither the time, nor, often, the energy to protest, or do all the things that can make women a vocal and vociferous part of society.

To Joyce Buchan I would say "Great, keep plugging away at all the stupid anomalies that exist in our society". To women like A. Cooper I would say "The women's movement exists for you, it exists in order that women may recognise themselves as worthwhile people and it exists to give help and support in order to break out of restrictive relationships where you are used and abused".

I would be very pleased to hear from any woman who feels herself to be in the same position as A. Cooper with a view to setting up communications channels throughout the country.

Yours sincerely
Janet Smith
Bromley

Hospital Births Reconsidered

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,

Having just completed six months as a doctor in an Obstetrics Unit, I would like to make some comments on Christine Beels' article entitled 'In The Beginning' (*SR49*).

I was very pleased to see many of my own views expressed concerning male domination and mystification of Obstetrics as a way of inferiorising the midwives. The unit in which I have been working illustrates this point when, for instance, senior midwives who previously would have trained young doctors and students in the art of vaginal examination, are not now allowed to do this.

However, despite my agreement with the first part of the article, I was disappointed that she then began to argue against hospital deliveries per se, instead of looking in more detail at the structure of maternity units and how they can be changed by an increase in the responsibility of the midwives and of the women having babies there.

I personally have no objection to women having home deliveries, but I feel there are two major crises which cannot be predicted easily and which cannot be adequately dealt with at home. Firstly, the baby might need resuscitation at birth, and the equipment plus the skilled personnel available in hospitals mean that the baby has a better chance of survival and without the brain damage which results from a long period without oxygen (more than three minutes). Secondly, the woman may suffer a haemorrhage after the birth. With all the possible precautions and skill of her GP and midwife, she could bleed to death before the Flying Squad arrived. However, I reckon that if a woman is prepared to accept those risks, she should be allowed a home delivery and facilities for this should be provided.

In my experience, most women are now choosing to have hospital deliveries and I feel that we should concentrate on improving conditions and increasing women's choice in hospital deliveries rather than making hospitals sound so unpleasant that women are put off.

Yours in sisterhood
Nadine Harrison
Edinburgh

A Trainee Midwife's View

Dear *Spare Rib*,

Thank you for your excellent article 'In The Beginning' (*SR49*).

I am sceptical about the Exeter University research which claimed to show a higher level of job satisfaction where obstetric interference is carried out and would be interested to know if the survey included: 1. midwives working outside hospital; 2. midwives who left the profession taking into account the reasons why.

As a trainee midwife there is nothing more satisfying to me than accompanying a woman throughout labour and assisting her, under supervision, with a normal delivery involving as little obstetric interference as possible. Although this is more likely at home it is not impossible in hospital by any means.

I hope the domicillary midwife is not in such a precarious position as Christine Beels suggests for, as she points out, after many years of expensive high-powered obstetrics in the US and Canada there are now significant moves to establish a domicillary service.

I hope this is one area where we can learn by example rather than by experience.

With best wishes
Elisabeth Forrester Knowles
Oxford

Riding Off Into The Night

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,

I write with reference to

[redacted]

Andrew Mann's review of the latest Michael Foreman book *All The Kings Horses* (*SR49*).

I know that there is a great struggle going on to raise people's awareness at the roles women have traditionally played, and that children's books are important. However, I do feel that we are losing sight of the fact that we are also fighting a class struggle (at least your magazine seems to imply that). To suggest that girls identify with princesses who reject their suitors and ride off into the night seems to me to be begging the question. You might as well refer girls to all the books that have ever been written about nuns, who have also renounced all their suitors.

In struggle
Jo Spence
London N1

Andrew Mann replies:
Jo has missed the point of All The Kings Horses. *Not only does it provide an exciting picture of an independent woman, but in doing so it demystifies royalty as well as sexist expectations of women, by taking the familiar princess in her castle routine to its logical opposite — no palace, no prince. Not all books with kings and princesses in them are royalist, nor do books about independent females necessarily negate men. All that this princess has achieved is the freedom to choose "rushing through the nightmares of kings . . ." Powerful stuff, for kids and all.*

Ask For What You Need

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,
Some women who use non-medical contraceptives (i.e. caps, sheaths, spermicides) have been meeting difficulties at FPA (Family Planning Association) clinics in obtaining the free supplies to which they are entitled, in the quantities that they know are needed for effective use of the method.

In one case, a woman was told she was only allowed one free tube of spermicide for six months. In others, women have been told that they ought not to mind paying for their supplies when the NHS is so short of money. Sometimes it has been necessary to have open and possibly embarrassing discussion of one's needs with lay workers in a public place within the clinic. The impression has been given, in some cases, that there is a fixed maximum amount allowed per client, and if she needs more she must buy it herself.

We have taken this matter up with the chairman of the FPA, who has told us that there is no fixed maximum, and it is up to each woman to ask for what she needs (within reason, obviously!) which should then be given to her without argument.

We would like to hear from anyone experiencing difficulties of this kind, whether in FPA clinics or NHS clinics. If you are refused the supplies you need — or if it is made difficult for you to ask or to insist — then please write to us, with as many details as possible (date, place, who said what, etc.). We will want to pass the information on to the appropriate authorities, so please state clearly if you don't want us to do so in your case.
In sisterhood,
Zoe Fairbairns, Jill Rakusen
PS Please write to us c/o Women's Research & Resources Centre, 158 North Gower St, London NW1.

The Continuing Saga of Simone

Dear *Spare Rib*,
Re: *Spare Rib* 49, letters page (S. de Beauvoir's answer to *SR*'s request for an article).

Please ask Simone de Beauvoir again.
A fervid reader

Fighting Fuel Bills

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,
It seems that women are expected to bear the brunt of this so-called economic crisis of rocketing food and fuel prices.

I've got really sick of just existing and not living a decent life. My children have a right to be decently dressed. You may say that everyone has to pay their bills. I agree, but I also say that we should have enough money to do this. Everyone has a right to fuel; it is no longer a luxury. Women suffer more when fuel is disconnected because they lose their washer, cooker, telly, fridge and lights.

Some pensioners I know are only allowed 55p a week towards their gas central-heated flats from the social security. Then social workers wonder why so many old people are found dead.

A few of us from my area, Chapeltown, have got together and formed a heating action group. We decided to support anyone having difficulty with the gas and electricity boards. I feel I ought to let other women know how we dealt with my electricity disconnection, so others may benefit from my experience.

I received a letter from the Yorkshire Electricity Board (YEB) saying they had obtained a warrant to use force if necessary to gain entrance into my home. We decided to physically stop them if necessary. We handed out leaflets to the men who work in the main YEB depot appealing to them not to disconnect anyone. We also had leaflets in our windows saying we would help anyone in difficulty.

When the YEB did arrive they took us all by surprise. We had planned that quite a few women would be both inside and outside of my house, but the YEB turned up at 8.20am in the morning — four workmen in a van with crowbars. I tried to fend them off until the others got to my house, but they called for reinforcements and a policeman, and managed to force their way in through the windows. But we now know how we can beat them — we plan to sleep at the next person's house to make sure that we are there first.
Julie Broadbent,
Leeds

LETTERS
9
NEWBURGH
STREET
LONDON
W1A
4XS

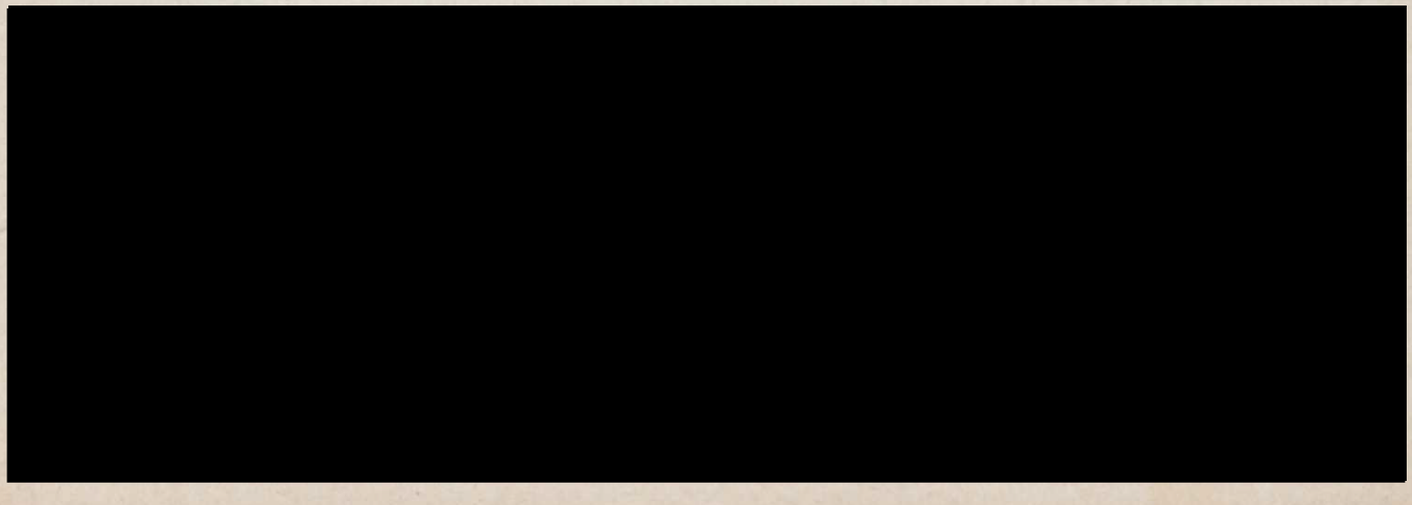
Bronze-Age Miniskirt

★ Dear *Spare Rib*,
Re Lisa Tickner's article on fashion in your latest issue. She states that sexual differentiation in dress started in the Middle Ages and that before then people had worn unisex tunics. What about the Minoan ladies who wore tight-fitting boob-exposing jackets and heavy flounced skirts. At the opposite extreme a bronze-age girl found in a bog in Denmark was wearing a see-through string miniskirt.
Love
Lucy Fisher
London NW5

The Female Body au naturel

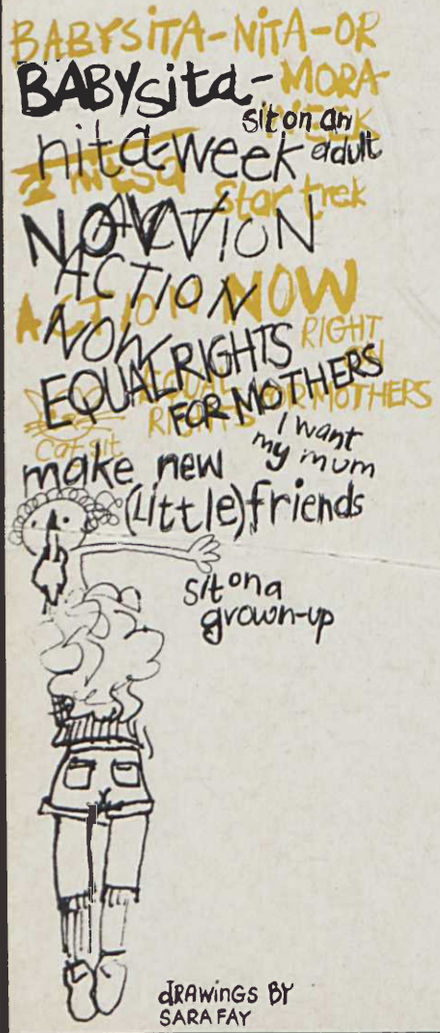
Dear *Spare Rib*,
Many thanks for your series on fashion and the body. I think it very iniquitous that we are constantly bombarded — particularly through advertising — with false images of the female body, distorted in one way or another to satisfy current male fantasy. Perhaps if we were allowed to know what the female body looks like au naturel, we could each stop feeling disgusted with our own.
Best wishes
Janice Robson
Hammersmith





Few people nowadays accept the old idea that a woman's place is exclusively with her children. Many see that a wide range of daycare facilities is a necessity for women's liberation. But when it comes to the evenings what happens to ideas of shared responsibility for children? Wisty Hoyland and Alison Fell investigate baby sitting and find that too often when night falls the blinds go down on equality.

B••YS••T••G A VERY PRIVATE PROBLEM



DRAWINGS BY SARA FAY

"Yes, I'd love to come, if I can get a baby sitter." The remark is familiar to those of us who are parents, when offered the possibility of an evening out.

"There's this fantastic film on tonight, you must come," or *"Why don't you come over and see us tomorrow night, say 7 o'clock?"* say our childless friends. Yes, we'd love to come, but who will look after the kids?

It seems such a trivial matter, as trivial as who does the washing up or who irons the shirts. But such trivial matters add up to something quite big. And baby sitting is something that many parents spend a lot of time worrying about.

Women in the women's liberation movement have been very concerned with daycare and provision of nursery facilities and creches. It's a vital problem that's been recognised and some progress has been made. There is a greater acceptance of the need for women to be free to go out to work — but what about freedom to play? And what about the mothers (yes, there are some) who never get out in the evening at all? Michelene Wandor, one feminist who gets very angry about the whole question, put it like this:

"When do most trade union meetings, political meetings, let alone the sacrilegious idea of going to the cinema, theatre, pub — take place. Why, in the jolly old evening of course, when everyone is home from a hard day's work in their jolly old homes, able to saunter off for a quick drink, go see a film, do evening classes to improve the mind or learn car maintenance, nip out and see a friend — well, life's more than just drudge, drudge, drudge, isn't it? I mean, after work, you can do what you like, can't you. Unless you've got kids, that is."

We talked to a number of people, mostly with kids of their own, but all involved in one way or another with baby sitting. We discovered that the parents we spoke to, ourselves included, all had very different expectations of what constituted freedom. To some, a night out once a month was a treat, to others, four or five nights out a week a necessity, to be struggled for at all costs. It very much depended on what people wanted to do with their evenings: for politically involved people, meetings were a priority, others saw evenings as a leisure period when they'd go to the cinema, or relax in the pub. Obviously these two groups weren't mutually exclusive.

In contrast some women we talked to saw their duty to their home and kids as a priority. They viewed the notion of an evening out as more hassle than it was worth in terms of cost, organisation and worry and guilt about leaving the children.

Solutions varied too. We talked to Mike, until recently a young doctor, who lives with Marie, his wife, and two children, in a house in North London. A single woman and her child live with them. When the three adults wanted to go out on the same night they used an organisation called the points system.

Mike: *"We belong to a baby sitting bank which is a cooperative scheme covering this area, which involves about 30 households and operates on a points system. You get a certain number of points per hour for baby sitting, and it varies according to the time, like you get four points an hour as the standard rate, but on Saturdays it's six points and after 12pm it's double points, and there are different variations on that.*

"Your host or hostess gives you a piece of paper with the number of points on it, which you keep and at the end of the month you phone up and report how many points you've earned. A different person handles the books and adds up all the points each month."

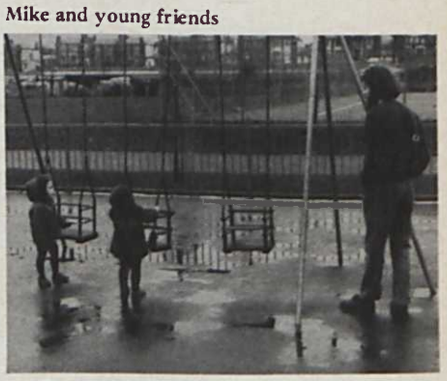
"What happens if you don't get many points?"

Mike: *"Quite a lot of people tend to be negative about it, which means that there might be someone with minus a hundred points all of the time. All the points are sent out to each member of the bank each month and people with low scores get rude remarks sometimes on their bits of paper. There's no formal sanction: it all works on good will and guilt. But the bank allows for people being negative. They more or less get as much as they take."*

"What sort of people are involved in the bank?"

Mike: *"They tend to be mostly middle class professional type people: some left-wingers, though there is one man who works for the Tory Central Office. Some of the people most active in the bank are very upright, professional with a capital 'P'."*

Mike and young friends



Some people felt they would rather pay a sitter than be involved in the points system. We spoke to Emily, who is very involved in local community action.

Emily: *"I have lots of evening commitments, when my husband Tom baby sits. There are very few evenings left for me to spend with him, and I don't want to have to pay for it in terms of time. I think the points system is a good idea, but I think the obligation involved is a heavier thing than paying."*

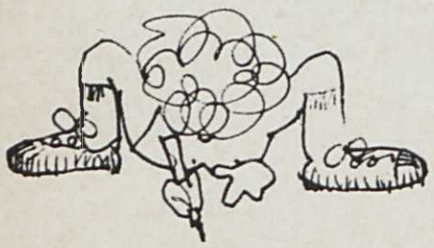
Obviously a great many parents do pay, so we investigated the organisations that provide this service. *Childminders*, which claims to be the largest baby sitting service in the world, charges 50—60p an hour depending on the day

of the week, for a sitter, and a £2 a year registration fee. *Babysitters Unlimited* charge 55p an hour, and in both cases the client is required to pay all the fares of the baby sitter. The baby sitters have to have experience with children and were generally qualified nurses, teachers, nannies and mothers. We asked if they ever employed men as baby sitters.

"No, they're all female," Childminders told us. *"We're allowed to discriminate now under the Act."*

When we put the same question to *Babysitters Unlimited* they said, *"Unfortunately, we now have to take on male baby sitters, because of the Equal Opportunities Act, though they have to have had experience with children."*

We asked who used the service. *"All sorts, all classes,"* we were told. *"In fact there are more working class people using us now than there used to be."*



Single Parents

"When the craze for publicity on single fathers was on, TV programmes made a point of saying how cut off the fathers felt because they couldn't nip down to the pub for a drink -- no-one would remark on women saying the same thing, or would they? We're expected to like knitting by the coal fire flickering while the children gently breathe sleep in the other room, and it is lovely sometimes . . ." Michelene Wandor

The options taken up by middle class families — like the efficiently organised points systems, or the agency baby sitter who has to be paid, run home, and so on — are not usually open to single mothers. The basic premise on which systems of points (or beans or counters or whatever) rest is that there are *two* parents, one of whom will be free to fulfil their obligation to baby sit for others, and one who can stay in with her own kids meanwhile. Of course, if you've been settled in one area for a long time, you may have had a chance to develop informal or communal arrangements with neighbours, friends or lovers, and an example of this is given later. But most single parents face far greater problems of isolation with their children than their counterparts in 'proper families'.

Gingerbread is a support and campaign organisation which many thousands of single parents belong to. We asked them how their groups tackled the problem of baby sitting:

"We think that some groups have tried baby sitting rotas — where parents take turns staying overnight at each others' houses, taking their children. But we know of little that's been successful — rotas fall apart. Baby sitting just is the weakest link."

Interestingly, they find that the widespread demand for baby sitters comes home to them in another way:

"Many — most — of the people who ring up offering accommodation to single parents and their children are in fact people seeking baby sitters — they'll offer a room free, for baby sitting." (Looks to us like cashing in!)

Croydon Gingerbread has 500 members, spread out over a large area. They organise a variety of evening activities, but at present their members have to rely on private baby sitting arrangements to get out to them. We asked Janet, one of the organisers, why this was:

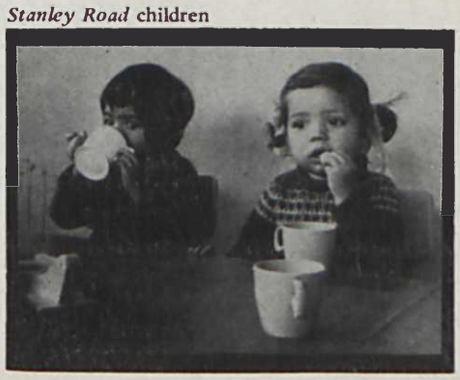
"We've tried just about everything — we tried a points system, we tried a voluntary system. We got up a list of people without kids, or those with older ones who could look after themselves . . ." Both failed, mainly, Janet reckons, because of the vagaries of London Transport.

"Have a dig at London Transport for us," she urged, *"it's so bad and it finishes so early here. Most of us don't have cars and we're spread out and very isolated on big estates. If you go out for the evening — and specially if you go to town to the pictures, say, you have to leave before it's finished or you can't get home — and the baby sitter certainly can't get home."*

One potentially successful solution entails calling on other local organisations for help with baby sitting. One such scheme in Walton and Weybridge in Surrey aims to set up a mutual aid exchange between single parents and retired people — pensioners would baby sit in return for help with sewing or shopping. A similar cooperative scheme called *Two-Way Help* is gradually growing up in Barnet.

"Anybody in the community can do something for someone else and get help in return, but we've found single parents and pensioners are the ones who're mainly taking it up at the moment. Gingerbread gave us names of their local members who might want to join — and this has been quite successful."

Stanley Road children





How much Freedom is Right?

Stanley Road Mother and Children Group operates from a new community hall in a quiet working class street in Tottenham. Local mothers bring their children here two afternoons a week and stay to mind them communally and have some adult conversation at the same time. We spoke to several mothers — all married — about what sort of arrangements they worked out in order to get a degree of freedom in the evenings, and found that strict ideas about women's role operated to dampen the expectation of such freedoms. Some of the women tried to organise evening films but failed dismally — only half a dozen people came. Mary spoke out about the reasons:

"Husband trouble — husbands wouldn't let them go out. You know, the usual business — the wife should be content to look after the kids, cook his dinners. From my point of view, my husband's OK. If I want to go and visit a friend, he's quite happy, he likes to have a few hours on his own. And if both of us want to go out together, Mary-Sue stays with my in-laws, or with my twin brother who lives near and has a little girl the same age. But I know that a lot of people do have a problem. I've got a friend I can't see very often because her husband works shifts, and doesn't like her having friends — she's got the two children and he thinks she ought to be happy just with them, without any other outlets."

"Does your husband mind how many times you go out?"

"If I made a pig of myself, of course he would mind, it would mean we weren't getting on, wouldn't it. I go out a bit less than him — on average once a fortnight, he's nearer once a week, and the three of us go out together on a Saturday. But of course before I started making any moves out, my husband had already been going out so often himself he couldn't say anything about me having the odd night out. I don't want to go out much — I don't drink, and I don't play bingo."

Joan: *"I wouldn't go out on my own, though sometimes my husband will. About twice a year. It's not much fun on your own, is it, like just walking the streets or something."* ▶

B••Y S••T••G

Depending on husbands to baby sit sometimes had drawbacks:

Jackie: *"I was fixed up to start a course of evening classes which I never got to. The first evening class he had a stomach ache and the next evening class his tooth was aching and the third one — oh, he'd already made arrangements to do something else, so I just gave up. But it seems to be a different attitude if it's paid work — he baby sits now, while I work in the evenings at a cinema. But we don't go out together more than four or five times a year, and then his mother looks after them. She doesn't really like doing it, though."*

The idea of baby sitting agencies wasn't popular at all:

Joan: *"If your child woke up and saw a stranger, they'd scream — you've got to find someone your children know and you can trust with your children. I would never leave my children for a minute with a stranger, let alone for hours on end. I know if I was a small child and I woke up to see a stranger in my bedroom I'd quite likely be frightened to go to sleep another night."*

All the women were critical of mothers who left older children in charge:

Mary and Joan: *"I know some who've got eleven-year-old children having to look after a two- and a five-year-old. I know there's a neighbour — they could bang on the wall and that, but in a crisis that's not really enough."*

Jackie: *"When I was a childminder, one of the mothers whose child I looked after got beaten up by her husband, and that was because she'd got two older ones at home — one was about eleven, and she'd left the little one in the flat with them, and the curtains caught fire."*

Jackie added: *"But if women socialised more with each other there would be less frustration and less desire to get out all the time. Because even if there's a group of you in each others' homes, your own children seem to behave better, and they're not under your feet so much . . ."*



"Sketch of the ideal: any political group — women's group, Labour Party, revolutionary organisations, even trades councils maybe, must have (who's a little dogmatist, then?) a policy of offering a carefully planned and organised baby sitting service, in which as many mothers as is possible have one guaranteed night out a week. That means each childless person must set aside one evening a week for baby sitting. Ideally this could be for a mother you already know; people could baby sit in pairs if they're scared of the little monst— whoops, darlings," Michelene Wandor suggests.

babysita-nita-week



So how do these organisations — all of whom state some kind of commitment to women's equality — tackle the problem of women's responsibility for children? Is it only men and childless women who can be consistently active within them?

We asked the secretary of a local CP branch, a single mother with two children, how the Communist Party deals with the situation:

"Very badly," she answered with the bitterness of someone engaged in continual battle about it. She feels that her branch hasn't really helped her out, and she has to make all her arrangements privately, paying for baby sitters herself.

"You find you just have to be assertive and aggressive about it all the time. On the whole the Party still thinks of women as mothers and housewives. And another point — the Party is still not thinking of its children, after all, they should be thinking of them as the potential communists of the future."

At a recent conference she stood up extremely nervously and made her first long speech, about childcare, and was cheered at the end of it by the women present.

"Older members are being forced by younger, mainly women members, to reassess things. The Party is trying — they've produced a pamphlet on childcare saying that all conferences must have creches, for instance."

But the pamphlet doesn't approach the question of baby sitting, and her personal situation remains bad:

"I've got to pay my own way every fucking time — if not, I've got to sit and stare at the wall."

Enquiries about the Labour Party drew a blank — the mothers we spoke to took it for granted that they had to make private arrangements for their children in order to attend meetings.

A member of the International Socialist group, himself a parent, told us:

"North London district at least — don't know about other areas — has a rota system of work-sharing, where comrades take it in turns to go round and baby sit at people's houses. But it can still happen that someone's a member, maybe can't get out to meetings because of kids, and it goes on for months and months without anyone knowing. A lot of people just aren't sensitive to the fact that parents are in a different situation and live different lives from non-parents. You have to educate childless people about your needs — you have to, in fact, struggle, and assert your rights in this as in everything else. So there is struggle about it at meetings — and of course there's no political consciousness without struggle."

Michelene Wandor expressed the sort of resentment felt by many mothers in the women's liberation movement:

"How do we tackle those people, mainly men, but boy oh bloody boy, almost every childless feminist, who say they do not *want to baby sit; many are scared of kids, don't know anything about them . . . don't want to 'give up' an evening . . . and what does that imply about their view of kids?"*

Stanley Road **mothers and children**



Many women who have decided against motherhood don't see why they should put themselves out to help women who have had children. But isn't this a rather individualistic view of liberation, and aren't mothers right to expect more elements of sharing, support and sisterhood?

Still expecting to find a higher level of consciousness and activity around baby sitting in women's liberation groups than in other areas of life, we searched for an exemplary group of mothers and non-mothers with a cooperatively organised system which freed its members for both meetings and leisure evenings. We failed. Consciousness about the problem is certainly higher but actual organising is patchy. One group we talked to always met in a house shared by the single mothers while the husbands of other members stayed at home to baby sit. A women's centre group tried an evening creche for quite a few months, but this was really only suitable for children who didn't have to get up

for school the next morning — both the response and the organising were unenthusiastic, and it soon petered out. Another London group which never had more than two mothers in it admitted that individuals had always solved their own problems.

"We've never accommodated to women with kids. If there had been more of them we'd probably have confronted it."



Some People Do

But then there are childless people who are conscious of the problem and who for various reasons volunteer time and energy. Margaret Edney's commitment grew out of her feminism:

"When the women's movement entered my life I started baby sitting as a sort of spontaneous 'help my sisters' thing. I offered to do it once a week for the other women in the group I was in — but I never really had any relationship with the children I was baby sitting. And the offer wasn't actually taken up as often as I thought it would be — there are problems with these sort of arrangements. For instance, perhaps the particular mothers wouldn't want to ask me too often, and sometimes I'd get a bit paranoid that this meant they thought I hadn't looked after their children properly. And then if someone asked me to baby sit and I had to say no because I'd already arranged to go to a meeting, I'd feel guilty.

"I think the main thing is trust. I've talked about this with other people who have decided not to have children of their own, and they all agree that what's important is developing trust with the parents, so that they don't feel you're going to fill the child with ideas they don't like, or whatever.

"It's complicated though, because having decided not to have children in order to have all my time for my own use, sometimes I'd feel slight resentment about giving up time to baby sitting."

Geoff Holland used to live with a single mother and her child. When she moved out to live in a different household, Geoff took on looking after her son and his friend on a weekly basis:

"I wanted him to go on being part of my life. And I took on Zim as well because he's a mate of Ivan's and lives with him — I've known him and his mother for quite a long time too."

"When do you baby sit, and what does it entail?"

"I look after the two boys every Friday night and Saturday, which involves picking them up from school, giving them dinner, bathing them, supper, reading them stories and so on. I have a lot of advantages over someone who has to look after them all the time — I've got a clear week to restore my patience if I get a bit fraught, so I can indulge myself with them. I'm more indulgent now than I used to be — I used to be a bit petty and restrictive, I thought indulging them was bad for them. But I don't completely overwhelm them with presents and comfort."

"Where do you baby sit?"

"At my home. I like to have them at my house, and it gives their household a break, an opportunity to do what they like and not have to think about the children at all, and from my limited experience of living in households with kids I know that these times are oases of peace and quiet."

"How do you think the kids like this arrangement?"

"Well, when I fetch them I'm always worried in case they say they don't want to come, but I've been looking after them every week for nine months now and they've never protested strongly. Zim has complained once or twice and had that 'I want to stay home' look on his face. I'm sure they both feel this at times, and if they were both clearly unhappy with the arrangement, if they protested loudly, I would discuss it with the adults in their household — but not before I'd tried to persuade the two kids that it might not be so bad, knowing that the household prefers a regular arrangement."

"Would you feel you were failing if they didn't want to come and stay?"

"Yes, I would, and I'd feel I'd let their household down. It's difficult to fore-feel, of course, but when the kids' displeasure is directed at me I feel guilty, and insecure about the whole thing."

Geoff Holland



"Do you think they know that?"

"Yes, I think they do, but they also know that my boundless insecurity is coupled with a boundless bad temper which they want to avoid — so they don't exploit it.

"But I don't see the whole thing as baby sitting, exactly, it's not 'doing a favour', it's more something that's bound up with my longstanding relationships with their parents, and them, and other adults I'm involved with in the locality, the friendship network. However, I don't see myself as having the same status or responsibility as their parents — more helper status — although I do take an interest in their lives and decisions taken about them, and expect to see them grow up and so on."

Of course, this sounds like an ideal arrangement, which everyone is satisfied with — the mother in question can still hardly believe her luck. But why shouldn't all parents assert their right to guilt-free evenings of enjoyment or meetings to which they can give their full attention and feel they're doing their bit towards changing the world — secure in the knowledge that their kids are happy and well looked after? No doubt, asserting our needs means facing blank looks, non-cooperation and downright prejudice from many people as we try to raise their consciousness and get them involved. And probably childless people who do start to help parents out will make elementary mistakes and face baffled looks from the children in their care. (Not to worry, children are far more tolerant of adults' antics than you'd imagine.)

It would certainly be a bad thing if children saw in their parents' freedom only unhappiness for themselves. We asked our own children what they thought when we went out in the evening, leaving them with someone else. Their answers varied at different times. Sometimes they said cheerily, "Off you go then, see you tomorrow," and sometimes they grumbled, "Oh, *why* do you have to go out *again?*" They were usually pretty interested to know who was going to put them to bed and look after them, and their attitudes to our departure varied according to this. Are people, in fact, over protective about children? Don't children, even small ones, like getting to know more adults, and having a rest from their own parents? We'd like readers to ask their children to tell the 'Children Page' what they think about the whole baby sitting question.□

•AB••IT•IN•

Thanks to all the people who talked to us and helped us with this article, and special thanks to Michelene Wandor, on whose ideas we drew freely, and whose abrasive notes inspired us to write in the first place.

spare Rib On the Road

Last month we announced a region by region campaign to gain more readers and contributors.

This month Eleanor and Stephanie visited Birmingham.

THE WOMEN'S CENTRE

The Women's Centre in Birmingham has its own terraced house at 76 Brighton Road in Balsall Heath. Fortified with fish and chips from round the corner, we talked with Linda who was 'on duty' and other women who came for the regular Thursday night meeting:

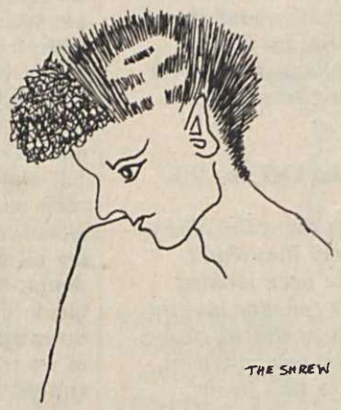
"This house was bought in January and we use it for our office, having meetings, putting out the Brum Women's Paper and a place where women can drop in for coffee and company. We realise that it's hard for women who live in other parts of the city to travel here: in some ways Brum is too large to be friendly, too small to have local centres like London. That's why we're working hard on the Regional Conference at the end of October [see Shortlist, *Spare Rib* 50], so we can all get together. We have our main monthly General Meeting in the city centre; policy decisions including those concerning the Centre, are made there.

"We also have our meetings for new members at the Peace Centre in the middle of town — they're for anyone who wants to find out more about the ideas and activities of the women's movement. This is really important — so many women go to a meeting for the first time, are ignored and confused and never return. Women who go to these introductory sessions can then join consciousness raising or action groups if they want to.

"Our Centre is in an Asian community and we are working on ways of reaching out to make contact with Asian women. The language barrier is a problem for a start and we're considering teaching English from the Centre. We have some space for anyone who wants to work here and some facilities like duplicating and silk-screening equipment.

"We're trying to collect information on everything that concerns women. We'd like people with resources or specialist knowledge, or anything they want to share, to get in touch with us so we can pass it on."

One novel idea came up at the meeting we attended: a disillusioned feminist hairdresser has offered to do hair cutting at the Centre. We fantasised about feminist hair styles for a while (scalps shaved except for a women's symbol?) but joking apart it sounds like an excellent and economic idea!



The Women's Centre is open weekdays 10am—noon and 6—8pm; Sats 10am—4pm. Open meetings every other Thursday at 8pm. Phone 449 2931 for info on new members' meetings. General meeting on first Thursday of each month at The Wellington Pub in Bristol Street.

BRUM SHORTLIST

These are groups we heard of, with someone to contact for details. We're very sorry if we missed you out.

★ *Women's Liberation Playgroup:* We have been going for the last three years and have just moved to Balsall Heath Park, right across the road from the Women's Centre. There's lots to be done with the new space and we have room for more children and parents. Men are involved on the rota and we believe in children growing up as themselves, not limited by traditional sex roles. We've produced a pamphlet ★ *Out of the Pumpkin Shell* about the playgroup, which has practical information on setting it up and discusses the ideas behind it. Teresa Davies 449 5875

★ *Women and Psychiatry:* A self-help therapy group where we can work together on problems in an atmosphere of sympathetic support.

★ *Women and Health:* As well as setting up our own services like pregnancy testing, we want to find out more about existing health facilities in the area so we can build up a good referral system, e.g. which GP's are sympathetic, and whom to avoid. We'd like women to get in touch with us to share their experiences and impressions. Contact Linda Pugh 449 7286 or Cindy Harris 449 1648.

★ *Equal Opportunities Action Group:* We're monitoring the recent legislation on sex discrimination and equal pay and can advise women on their rights and help them prepare their case. Jenny Stokes 449 8301.

★ *Women Artists Group:* (visual arts). We have some space and facilities at the Centre. Phil Goodall 449 2830.

★ *Working Women's Charter Group:* Chris Sylvester 523 4697.

★ *Gay Women's Group:* We're just getting this off the ground and welcome more women. We meet at the Centre every other Wednesday evening and have a rota then to do counselling. On Tuesday night we have a women's bar at the Greyhound Pub, Holloway Head (city centre), and after harrassment by landlord and police in the spring at the other disco, this is a really nice place to go (other gay bars in the city tend to be mostly men's)

★ *There are local groups* in Selly Oak and Erdington and both Aston and Birmingham universities have active women's liberation groups.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Useful phone numbers and places

Women's Centre: 449 2931
Pregnancy Testing and abortion advice: BPAS and Brook Advisory (see opposite page).
FPA: 454 8236
Gay Switchboard: 449 8312
Claimant's Union: 325 Dudley Rd. 786 Bristol Rd B29
Shelter: (Housing Advice) 177 Corporation St. B4. 236 0964

Things to read and where to get them

Brum Women's Paper. Gladrag (Gay Liberation Paper). Broadside (radical magazine). Moseley Paper (community paper). Peace Centre (publishes its own newsletter) 18 Moor St. B4 643 0996. Prometheus Books (alternative bookshop with good women's section) 134 Alcester Rd, Moseley B13.

BRUM WOMENS PAPER 12p

This monthly paper is produced collectively from the Women's Centre and costs 12p for 12 pages. It contains features (current issue is about sterilisation), news, discussion, calendar of events and lively graphics and cartoons.

We talked with Sophie and Carol about how it started: "We had been putting out a duplicated newsletter which was a lot of work and only reached women in the movement. So about nine months ago we decided to reach out more and produce an offset litho paper which could have more general articles on issues of concern to women as well as discussion and information about the movement. That's what we do now and we sell the paper in newsagents, alternative bookshops and on the street. We work as an open collective and welcome contributions from anyone; we always need help with distribution too."

Next Month
On The Road goes to Cardiff, then to Leeds. Please let us know if you want a listing.

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Leeds (0532) 443861
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London (01) 222 0985
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No formal educational qualifications are necessary. Mature students are particularly welcome. We have 100 students this session—why not you, next session? The next course starts in September 1976. Discretionary grants are available from your local education authority—early application is advised.

Write for further details and an application form: Admissions Office, Middlesex Polytechnic, (Ref. CO7J), 82-88 Church Street, Edmonton, London N9 9PD, or telephone 01-807 9001/2.

TIME FOR EQUALITY

The march of time overtook the Norfolk clock manufacturers Jentique/Metamec in August when the Central Arbitration Committee ruled that the 313 women employees should achieve equal pay by January 1977.

The General and Municipal Workers' Union referred the case to the Committee under the Equal Pay Act, after two years' negotiations failed to provide equal pay.

The GMWU's legal officer, Jeremy McMullen, said: "This is an important decision from the legal point of view. It shows that the very narrow interpretation of the Equal Pay Act that industrial tribunals are using is unrealistic.

"But at the Arbitration Committee we can open up the whole question of discriminatory rates throughout the plant, and the out-of-date grading structures."

The GMWU has the know-how and the will to fight inequality and discrimination in the workplace but first workers must organise together. For advice and help to organise, contact:
General Secretary, General and Municipal Workers' Union, Thorne House, Ruxley Ridge, Claygate, Esher, Surrey, KT10 0TL.

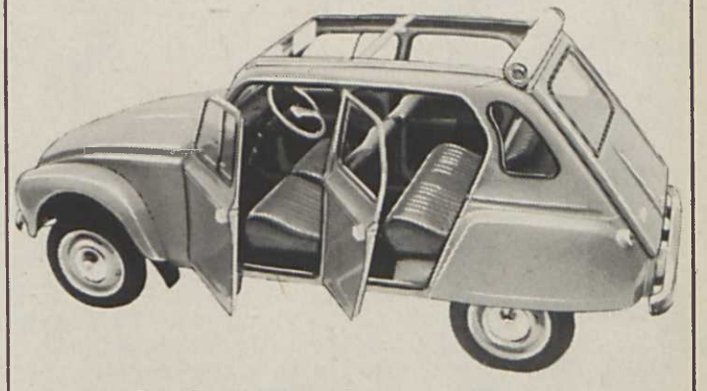
GMWU
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...odds & info...

Women's Poems

I have been writing poetry on and off for some years, but have never spent a great deal of time on it. I would now like to spend more time writing poems on women and for women. I wonder if any of your readers would like to correspond with me about their poetry? I am very much an amateur, but would like constructive sympathetic criticism, and would offer the same.

Yours
Caroline Halliday
108a Manor Avenue
Brockley, London SE4

Breast Screening

I have attempted to find a clinic, or similar, where routine checks are made for breast cancer without the need of being referred by a GP. Is there any organisation which does this, either with or without charging a fee?

Yours sincerely
L. Jones
Wolverhampton

The Women's National Cancer Control Campaign do screening and early detection. Their telephone number in London is 01-499 7532. To make an appointment and obtain information in your area, write to the Health Department, 59 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton. Tel: Wolverhampton 24281.

Co-Ownership of Property

Could you send me any information about the things to take into consideration when planning to go into the co-ownership of property. The crucial issue at the moment is to solve the practical problem of housing by tackling it with others rather than to set up a commune.

Sincerely
Lena Shaw
Tamworth, Staffs

For basic information get in touch with The Housing Centre Trust, 62 Chandos Place, London WC2. Tel 01-240 3424. Ask them for the literature about housing associations and housing societies which is put out by the National Federation of Housing Societies. This will provide you with basic information about model constitutions for co-ownership. Ask them also for literature about the Housing Corporation, which is a government backed agency for loaning money.

In addition, you may find the Laurieston Legal Frameworks handbook useful. It's now out of print but is available in Alternative England and Wales *(obtainable at most left-wing and alternative bookshops).*

Sexism in Schools

I am very concerned about sexism in schools particularly in the area of physical education. Female children are excluded from football and directed instead to netball. Male children are treated similarly. The children are being denied freedom of choice and girls and boys are being made to conform to society's stereotypes of male and female behaviour.

I am sick of it and so are my children. Is there a pressure group that is solely for children's liberation? Also I would welcome correspondence from like-minded parents on this and any other subject related to women's and children's liberation.

Your magazine is my only source of comfort these days.

Love, liberation
Elizabeth Panchaud
Reding House
Shalford
nr Braintree, Essex

Your best bet would be to write to the National Council for Civil Liberties, 186 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1. They are looking into the legality of different forms of sexism in schools in relation to the Equal Opportunities Act, and would be able to advise you.

Information Required

We have received a number of letters from women asking if there is any connection between taking the Pill and developing polycystic ovaries. There seems to be no reference to this side effect in the medical literature. We have checked with the Committee on Safety in Medicines and they have so far had only three reports. Would anyone who has developed polycystic ovaries please contact us?

Best wishes to you all
Jean Robinson
The Patients Association
Suffolk House
Banbury Road
Oxford OX2 7HN
Tel: 0865-50306

IF BIRMINGHAM IS A 'BLACKSPOT' GOD KNOWS WHAT YOU'D DESCRIBE SUTTON COLDFIELD AS! But I'm sure it's possible . . . Anyone interested in forming a women's group in north Birmingham? Please contact Jean Timmermans, 40 Maney Hill Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands. Phone (work) (476) 8211x315. (home) (476) 354 7934.

CENSORSHIP

I am currently researching a project for the Defence of Literature and the Arts Society on the subject of Institutional Censorship. I would be most grateful if any *Spare Rib* readers could let me know of any cases (past or present) of censorship in prisons, hospitals, libraries, schools, universities, etc., that they've come across.

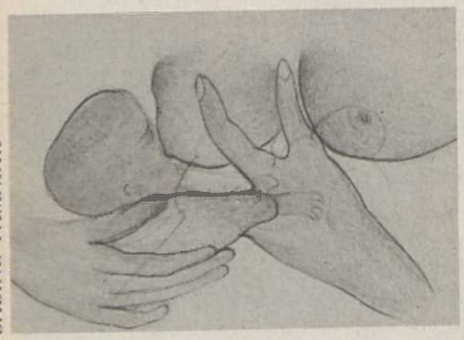
Yours sincerely
Jane Cousinns
The Defence of Literature and the Arts Society
18 Brewer St
London W1R 4AS

NORTH KENSINGTON WOMEN'S AID

North Kensington Women's Aid have been granted some money be Kensington and Chelsea Council towards the cost of setting up a refuge in the area but desperately need helpers for fundraising and to form the nucleus of a support group. Anyone interested should contact:

Daytimes: Jane Hickman at 01-969 7473
Evenings: Anyone at 01-727 1327

Editors note
See also **The Paradise Papers** *by Merlin Stone (Virago);* **The Silbury Treasure: The Great Goddess Rediscovered** *by Michael Dames (Thames & Hudson) reviewed on page 37 of this issue.*



SABINE YAMNIAK

Every Mothers Day

Every Mothers Day
she tells me all I meant to her
a broken sacroiliac
a broken marriage.

She is right
and I keep silent
because before I saw
the light of day,
I hated her.

Back, back in the dark heat
of her airless womb,
I had plotted.
A confined prisoner,
I stretched my body across her belly,
kicking it further and further out.
And when I had made her scream
and cringe, I fought my way out,
ripping out with me
whatever I could grab.

Daily, I sucked on her warm milk,
gnawing at her flesh.
With all my weight I pulled those round
breasts
down, down, to the centre of her
stomach
until they dropped against her belly
like pork on a butchers block.

Her teeth turned brown and brittle.
The dentist drilled and filled,
and still the teeth went bad.

Daily, Daddy circles round and round
my crib, and when we are alone,
I twist up my fat stomach,
gurgling,
and I smile, toothless.

JAMIE CALLAN





The Yiddisher Momma

The Yiddisher Momma, as I understand
her to be,
is a BIG woman
with tits like tea-pots
and an arse like an oven.

When you go to see her
she is always in the last stages
of making chicken soup.

Of course you're not intruding!
She sits you down, she puts the kettle
on,
she says, excuse the mess. You sigh.

She's dodging round the kitchen, doing
things.
Her busy hands
crush garlic grind pepper squeeze discard
meanwhile
her eyes are milking you.

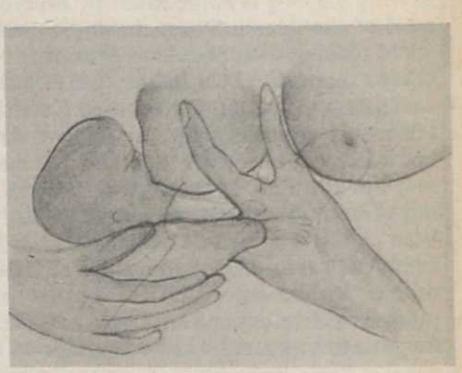
Your story trickles out
then floods. She nods. She knows
each villain in it like a novelist
— they're old friends too.

A mug of tea appears before you
with some sort of solid sandwich,
you haven't eaten for days
but now, of course, you eat.

Gradually, she ceases to circle the
kitchen,
turns down the gas, covers the pan,
and comes to rest across the table,
moving in for the kill, the final
revelation.
More tea?

Oh, and then the advice!
Now let me see . . .
down comes the Encyclopaedia of
Extreme Situations
from the cook-book shelf —
no ignorant momma this.
Her finger makes a grease-mark on the
page.

You can stop worrying now.
Who else will, hours at your disposal,
work out letters, sequels, alternatives,
meetings and endings? She
weighs up, sifts, she's simmering,
stirring, skimming,
salting and sampling,
the pain of this, pressure of that,
the human unlikeliness of the other . . .



The soup chuckles in its pot,
fruitcake is eaten, biscuits,
more tea, more tea.

This poem has several endings.

In the first, she pops you in the soup
just to keep warm till bedtime.

In the second, she ushers you out,
telling you to come back any time,
don't have to phone, you know you can
always stay,
spare bed, spare toothbrush,
and if you're still confused,
she knows a wonderful *psychiatrist . . .*

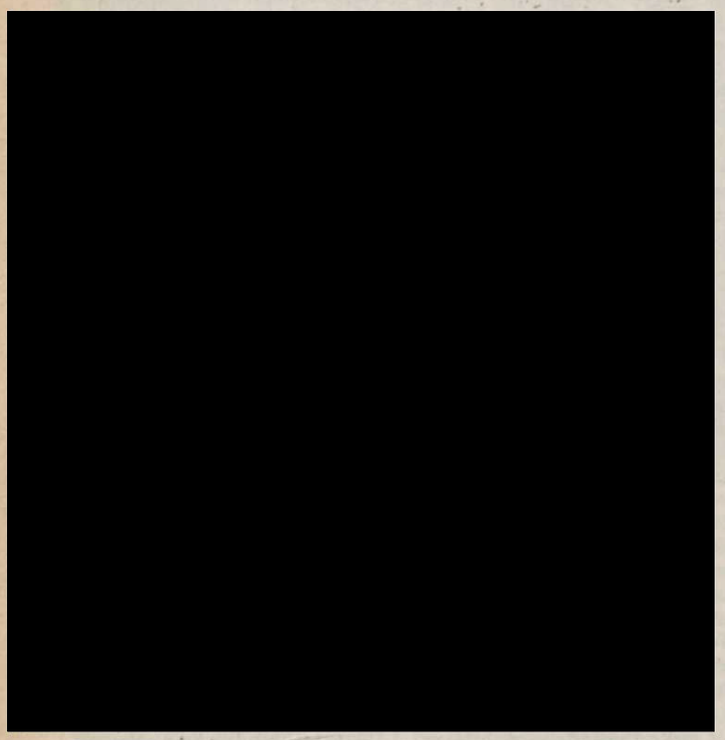
As soon as you're safely away,
she runs back to the kitchen
and switches off the cassette,
snickering to herself:
another recording, a jewel this time,
for her private collection of Human
Folly and Weakness —
she's eager to play it back.

In the third ending,
she takes her apron off
and her tits off
she presses a button
and the kitchen disappears.
The two of you are standing somewhere
bleak
like, under the motorway.
You can take your problems elsewhere,
she says,
I'm tired of you bastards bleeding me
white.
Then she disappears too.

STEPHANIE SMOLINSKY



NEWS



ADVENTURE TOURS: DO WOMEN SPOIL THE IMAGE?

"A woman behind the wheel does not fit the image of an adventure tour." Mary O'Connor claims she was refused a place on a drivers' training tour with Contiki Travel on these grounds.

Mary, a New Zealander who has been living in England since last August, had presented the firm with all the necessary driving qualifications and evidence of her experience as a busdriver. What is more, after the interview, she was in fact offered a place as the only woman on their European training tour. This prompted her to arrange for visas and to give up her teaching job and flat.

Five days before the tour, Contiki informed her that the managing director had turned her down, because she was a woman. Mary was in no doubt that he was committing an unlawful act of discrimination.

Sexist Tribunal

With the help of the National Council of Civil Liberties, she took Contiki Travel before an industrial tribunal. On average the NCCL handles one case of discrimination per month.

"We have women who come here and break down, not knowing what to do, frightened of victimisation if they press an equal pay claim. Taking legal action is not always an easy decision to make," explained NCCL's women's rights officer Jean Coussins. "You have to consider all the possible side effects."

Mary didn't have much to lose. She still thinks it crucial for women that firms don't get away with discrimination, even though the whole tribunal joke.

"It dragged on and on. Not one of the panel seemed to know much about the Sex Discrimination Act. Quite farcical really. The lawyers kept on having to redirect them to relevant questions," she commented.

Ironically, the chairman, in true patriarchal style, insisted on referring to the potential applicant for the job as 'he'. Even the woman trade union representative on the panel reflected this kind of crassness, epitomised in her assessment of the loss incurred by Mary: "It seems unlikely that a person as young and attractive as Miss O'Connor will not find a job."

A Trivial Case?

This degrading atmosphere was skilfully manipulated by the firm's (female) lawyer to discredit Mary's sincerity: the manager claimed not to remember saying anything discriminatory. He maintained it was the Dutch company, who supplies Contiki with buses, which would not accept women drivers for testing. He said he had made this clear, as well as the fact that drivers would be operating from Holland.

In summing up, Contiki's lawyer said: "This is not an applicant of the usual kind which the Act was designed for . . . This is a girl who has been killing time around the world for a couple of years."

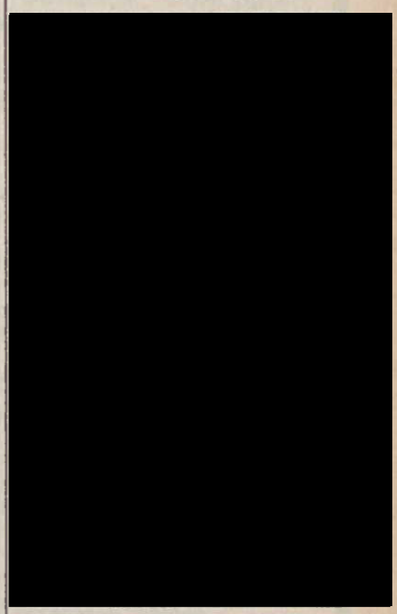
She implied that this case was trivial, as she thought the Act had been designed for industrial cases. Mary's lawyer pointed out that the Act was designed 'for women'.

In all it seemed as if Mary had been taken to court rather than Contiki. "It's in-built prejudice from government departments to have put the burden of proof on the applicant," Jean Coussins said. "We have to press for the Discrimination Act to be brought in line with the rest of employment law, so that the employer or other person accused of discriminating would have to prove he hadn't." The psychological effect of this law as it stands is similar to what session rather took the shape of a misplaced woman driver happens in rape trials, where again the woman seems to have to justify her position.

High Failure Rate

It took the panel one month to decide on Mary's case. She lost. The tribunal found that discrimination had indeed taken place, but that it hadn't been unlawful, as Mary's work would have been outside Britain. The NCCL commented: "We are disturbed that the policy of foreign firms can seemingly dictate to firms in this country the extent to which they abide by English law. The Act ought to be amended to cover people engaged in this country by firms registered and operating here, even if their work will actually take place outside the country."

Judging by the high failure rate of equal pay and sex discrimination cases brought before tribunals, it was not exceptional for Mary to lose. As far as the Equal Opportunities Commission knows, out of 110 equal pay cases in the first six months of 1976, only 31 succeeded and of 20 sex discrimination cases only five won.



One starts wondering who these acts were designed for, and if it's really possible to legislate discrimination out of existence.□

Anny Brackx

WORK NEWS

WALES: TEMPS ON TRIAL

What happens when non-unionised, temporary workers stand up for their rights? Jane Hutt *reports on a recent case in West Wales:*

Betty Harries and Marina Spruce were employed by South Pembrokeshire District Council, earning £30 a week as 'general clerks' doing exactly the same work as the male 'rating officers'.

When they asked for a rise, they were sacked, so they took the council to court for unfair dismissal, unequal pay and victimisation under the Sex Discrimination Act. Eight months later they heard they had won on unfair dismissal but lost on the other two.

Their case is important because it exposes the exploited position of temporary workers. The council had employed them as temps at low rates with none of the obligations they have towards full time staff. After six months the women were annoyed that they were still getting only £30 a week — Marina especially needed more to pay off her mortgage and support her three children. They decided to ask the Director of Finance for a rise.

Betty told the tribunal that he said: "We deserved it, we'd saved the council a lot of money in the rates we'd recovered." He suggested they approach the Personnel Manager, Mr Gottwaltz — "But all he said was, 'You'll not get a penny more'."

Betty and Marina wrote to the EOC for more information, and decided to appeal to a tribunal. The council was notified, and three weeks later: "Mr Gottwaltz marched into our office, slammed the letters on the table — we'd got the sack."

They'd been given notice 25½ weeks after they started work. The council had been clever — after 26 weeks a temp has more rights.

Troublemakers?

At the Unemployment Office Marina discovered that you could take an employer to court for unfair dismissal. She and Betty prepared the case themselves with no legal advice or support from a union. Nervous at the last minute they hired a solicitor to represent them. Often over the three days of the tribunal they felt they could have done it better themselves, if they'd had more idea of what was expected.

After months out of work, Marina applied for a job with a nearby council. At the interview she was told: "You don't look like a militant." Word must have got round the employers' grapevine. She didn't get the job.

The council evidently sacked the women to get rid of trouble. Their excuse was that they didn't need them any more because the backlog of work had been reduced; minutes of a council meeting revealed this to be false. Worse still, at the meeting where they decided to sack Betty and Marina, they also decided never to take on temps for more than three months — so as not to give them any rights at all.

Marina and Betty haven't given up; they plan to appeal. "We fought for the principle — our right to equal pay. That's why we came to the tribunal, and we're determined to see it through."□

WEST LONDON: The struggle of playleaders in Hammersmith for better pay and conditions was reported in *Spare Rib* 50. Since then their union, NALGO, has won a £6 pay rise for assistant playworkers on adventure playgrounds and in council-run one o'clock clubs.□

FRAIL YOUNG GOLFER

RICHMOND: One of Britain's top golfers claims she was turned down for the post of professional at Richmond borough's new course because she is a woman.

Vivien Saunders, 29, who despite top qualifications has been rejected for 17 jobs, told a tribunal that she was asked at the interview whether men would respond as well to a woman as a man. "It's like asking a black man if white men would respond to him," she said.

A golf club committee member who'd asked her if she felt capable of "controlling men at the starting tees" said in court he thought this a fair question to ask "a frail young woman like you, against some bulky golfers".

The tribunal has adjourned till October.□

TOO OLD?

LONDON: Linda Price, 35, has won the first round of a battle against the Civil Service for using age limits as a form of sex discrimination. She was turned down for an executive officer post because the age limit was 28.

Linda, a divorced mother of two with a diploma in social administration, said to the *Daily Mail*: "I left school at 16 and worked as a secretary. It seems wrong that after going back for further education to improve my job chances I should be prevented from applying on the grounds of my age.

"My claim is that this sort of age limit affects women far more than men."

A tribunal agreed that she had a case which must be heard.□

HELP NCCL FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The NCCL Rights for Women Unit is working hard to defend and extend women's rights by:

- helping individuals with their cases
- running courses to train 'lay advocates' to bring equal pay and sex discrimination cases before tribunals and courts
- publishing *Rights for Women*, a detailed and comprehensive guide to the new laws
- closely monitoring the workings of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, and of the Equal Opportunities Commission
- proposing and campaigning for further changes in the law.

We are working on other important issues too, such as maternity rights, domestic violence, rape, women's right to abortion on request, and equal treatment in pensions, social security and taxation. We maintain close contact with the trade unions and other women's organisations.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CARRY ON

To finance our work we have set up *The Collective Fund.* This is based on small, regular donations from individuals who pledge to pay £1 a month or £10 a year by bankers order. In return we send out regular newsletters to show how the money is being spent.

CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE COLLECTIVE FUND?
CAN YOU GET OTHERS TO CONTRIBUTE?
A little from a lot of people goes a long way.

Please fill in the coupon below and send it to NCCL, Freepost, London WC1X 9BR (no stamp needed).

NAME

ADDRESS

☐ I wish to pledge £1 a month/£10 a year. Please send me the bankers' order form. ☐ I enclose a donation of £ to the Collective Fund. ☐ I know other women who may be willing to contribute. Please send me extra bankers' order forms. *[TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES]*

Gerda Boyesen Centre for Bioenergy | **Institute of Biodynamic Psychology**

The Centre and Institute are now established in new, permanent premises at Acacia House, Acton Park.
We provide individual sessions in vegetotherapy and biodynamic massage therapy, plus an on-going programme of experiential groups, lectures and practical courses.
The next professional training programme begins on September 25 with a 9 month Foundation Course in Bioenergy and Biodynamic Psychology.

For details write or phone
Centre for Bioenergy
Acacia House, Centre Avenue,
The Vale, Acton Park,
London W3 7JX
Telephone 01-743 2437

TRICO'S: SACKING THE SHOP FLOOR



The four month old equal pay strike of 350 women at Trico's Brentford factory moved into a new phase yesterday (September 1) when Trico's management announced shutdowns at both their Brentford and Northampton plants. Over 500 production workers will be laid off from Friday 3rd.

The decision by the American-owned company gives the lie to the letters they sent to all the strikers recently, urging a return to work since 'materials are getting through and the picket is pointless'.

It's not yet clear whether the shutdown and lay-offs will be temporary or indefinite, or what the immediate effect will be on the car industry — Trico's have a near monopoly on the manufacture of windscreen wipers in this country (British Leyland is already feeling the pinch — apparently they've been delivering cars to dealers with just one wiper, on the driver's side!)

Workers in the car industry have been trying to black Trico products; strikers are visiting factories all over the country, and plan to lobby the TUC.

Flexible Supermen

On August 25 a tribunal dismissed the women's case for equal pay — a case that only the management took to court. The strikers, backed by their union, the AUEW, boycotted the tribunal.

"We expected a no," said Roger Butler, AUEW District Secretary, "that's why we didn't go. If we had, we'd be bound by the decision. We never formed unions to hand over our power to civil servants and lawyers."

The tribunal heard the management's story on August 17. Two women and the union were listed as 'respondents'. Kemp, the company's lawyer, had the union struck off "because the jurisdiction of this tribunal is limited to dealing with disputes as between employers and employees". In other words, back to the days of one worker against the boss — but now with the law firmly behind the boss.

"That leaves the applicant (Trico's) standing as against the two female respondents only. Unfortunately neither has entered an appearance . . ."

So they accepted the employers' evidence and decided that the five men to whom the women could be directly compared did indeed do exactly the same work — at the moment. But until April 26 they were on nights. Now, for nightwork you have to be very "flexible" — and so deserve more money. (You also have to be male — and so deserve more money?)

But if they had once deserved more, they didn't now. "So here the company must rely upon the 'escape' provision contained in subsection 3 of section 1 of the Act." (They actually *call* it an escape clause!)

By this loophole the employer must prove that there's a "material difference" between the woman's case and the man's. *Case*, not work. So the company had to prove only that the men's *circumstances* were different.

After that it was easy. The men get more because they used to. But this is allegedly "transitional" — one unspecified day it will be phased out and everyone will be equal. (No mention though of raising the women's wages. The men are meant to mark time — i.e. accept a wage cut — until the women catch up.)

Case dismissed. □

Contact Trico Strike Committee, c/o AUEW House, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall, Middx, to find out what kind of support is most needed now. Donations to the Strike Fund urgently required.

JUST CUSHION FILLERS?

NORFOLK: Over 300 women workers at a furniture factory should get equal pay by January, according to the government's Central Arbitration Committee.

This judgement goes against a recent industrial tribunal decision that they didn't deserve the same rate as the men.

They're in a separate grade as "woman cushion fillers", earning £3.69 less than the lowest paid men.

Their union, the GMWU, took the case to the committee because the tribunal's definition of equal pay was so narrow.

LOW PAY — SOME BLITZ

The government is boasting of a 'blitz' on firms paying less than the legal minimum wage.

"Too many employers in some industries are, in effect, picking the pockets of their employees," said John Grant, Employment Under-Secretary. So on July 30 he announced that government inspectors would be descending without warning on notorious low-payers — hotels, restaurants and some rental trades.

But the inspectorate is too understaffed to begin to enforce the official minimum, let alone anything better.

The 'blitz' is "just throwing a couple of custard tarts," say the Low Pay Unit and the Society of Civil and Public Servants, who want the wages inspectorate to be strengthened, not cut as it has been recently.

No extra staff are being taken on for this propaganda exercise, which will last only two weeks.

It's mainly women who earn the official minimum or less, often working in areas where wages inspectors take the place of trade unions. Many of these firms are outside the scope of the Equal Pay Act — because they employ only women or less than five people. □

DON'T WORRY, THE UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES AREN'T REALLY UP . . .

So there *are* 1½ million registered out of work, but it's only because of women.

When the latest figures were announced on August 24, the Press Association (used by most newspapers, especially outside London) reported without comment that the government felt that an "encouraging factor is that in the last three months, most of the increase in unemployment was among women". So that's alright. □

BODY NEWS

What Went On At THE FROG AND NIGHTGOWN?

The long-haired stripper bit his nails in the magistrates' court where he was up for aiding and abetting keeping a disorderly house (see *SR* 50). He was listening to the woman cop who "couldn't see anything". Did he push his genitalia in a girl's face? Rub against a woman who grabbed at him? Dance naked on the stage after simulating masturbation? Any of these acts are an offence in a bar. She said she hadn't been able to see through the dense crowds of women.

The court was as solemn as the Frog and Nightgown pub in the Old Kent Road has become dead since the ending of the male strip shows in March — discos just weren't the same. "These male strippers are all the rage," protested the publican, insisting the act was decent. "I don't live off the flesh." But he didn't live off the pub any more; this case was the last straw for his licence.

O'Donnel — stage name Starr — the stripper, claimed he'd only touched women twice — with the 18 inch rubber toes and hands of his monster costume. He'd never thrust "his little beauty" as the DJ might or might not have put it on the night, into a woman's face. She might have bit! Besides, he'd be up for indecent assault. Nor would be simulate masturbation with his right hand as claimed, because he is left handed. A nice, clean act, that was all.

Cops caught with pants down?

The publican's solicitor kept



trying to catch the cops on the hop. Certainly their evidence was strange. It was almost all from a 14 page report written by two policemen . . . an amazing feat of memory, as the solicitor pointed out.

It conflicted with the evidence of the other policemen, present to spot juveniles. And it conflicted with the few photographs taken (on impulse?) by the police photographer who'd been asked not to take any shots.

The real laugh came when it appeared the constables didn't know the difference between briefs and a g-string.

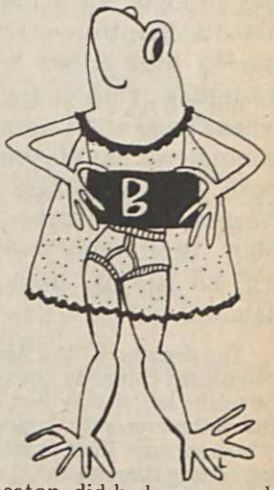
But the magistrate wasn't too keen on the attempts to clarify the nature of what O'Donnel had stripped to. He discreetly declined to view the photograph which demonstrated how you could tell a g-string by the amount of buttocks exposed, and barely glanced at the underwear draped over the bar. He frowned a lot and came back later to rule for the prosecution.

Mobbed

Is male stripping on the out? Unlikely. It didn't seem that the case was part of a crackdown. The Frog and Nightgown had been popular with teenagers; the police had prosecuted juveniles there already; possibly it was just the finale to a careless publican's career.

Possibly O'Donnel had stripped too far — there's no nudity permitted in bars. But since the test case on male stripping was won a while ago, guys have been peeling off in dozens of locations to the usual cries of "Get 'em off" and then "Is that all you've got?"

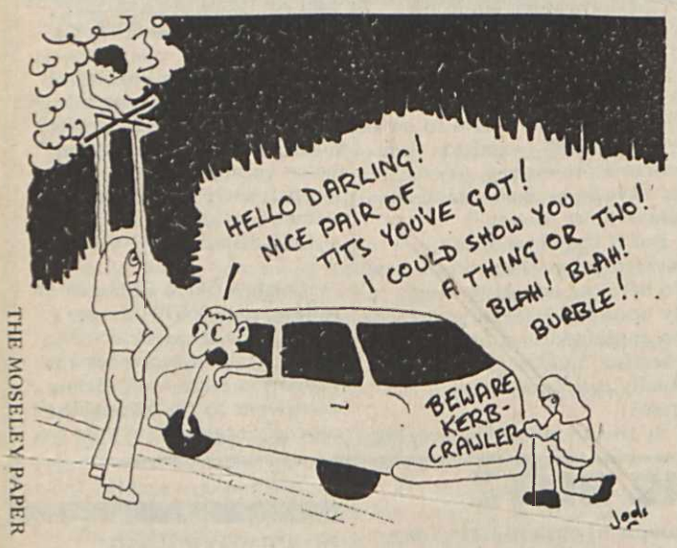
For O'Donnel, it pays, and he says he always has a giggle. Before the arrest he'd been working six nights a week for around £100. Only once, in



Nuneaton, did he have a rough time: the women mobbed him, debagged his driver, and the two men had to run for it over broken bottles and barricades of furniture. He was scared . . . but never charged *them* with disorderly conduct!

You wonder if they could have prosecuted a woman with the same ease. Perhaps it'd be different if the cops enjoyed it — but one boasted outside how his wife even, preferred female strippers. But male stripping has really caught on. Do women go for a laugh, to see a parody of a female striptease, or to revel in man as sex object? Whatever the reasons for going, it's funny how men's pleasures are decent while women's so easily become . . . disorderly? □

Clare Cherrington



THE MOSELEY PAPER

BIRMINGHAM: "All the time I lived in Trafalgar Road, I was terrified to walk up the street after dark. You expected every doorway to hold someone with a knife, and if it wasn't that then it was cars crawling after you along the kerb."

"I once made the mistake of smiling at a man in Moseley. He followed me right up the street, in broad daylight, making loud, offensive remarks. When you've put up with that for a while, you get used to going round with your eyes glued to the ground — it's easier."

Kerb crawling, and hassling generally, are all to familiar to us all. But in the Moseley area of Birmingham it's getting out of hand. There have been so many complaints in fact that a recent meeting of the Trafalgar Road Street Committee finally agreed to take action.

The plan is to put stickers on the back of offending cars. So there could be a lot of marked vehicles round Birmingham soon . . .□

KEEP OFF VALIUM

Valium and Librium could cause birth defects such as hare lips if taken during pregnancy.

The warning came from the US government after a probe by the Food and Drug Administration, who said: "These studies do not demonstrate conclusively that these tranquillisers can cause birth defects. But their use during pregnancy should almost always be avoided."

Hoffman-La Roche, the multimillion multinational that manufactures the drugs, of course denied it.□

'SURE, I RAPED HER'

John Margetts raped a 17-year-old who the papers call a "beauty queen", hardly surprisingly got off in court — then boasted he had done it.

"I knew I'd get away with it . . . I didn't give a sod about her. Why should I? If it ruined her life that's just tough."

But under British law no-one can be tried twice for the same offence. They can only be prosecuted for alleged perjury.

So he probably *will* get away with it.□

SAVING ON OUR HEALTH

The DHSS has decided that too much money is being spent on hospital maternity care — in fact on hospitals in general. How are facilities for women affected?

Having used the failure of the lifts at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in London as a reason to empty all but 30 of the beds there, the Area Health Authority could now use the failure of the heating system as an excuse to close the hospital completely. If the heating isn't working by October, the hospital could be closed on grounds of — wait for it! — danger to health.

Threatening to close the EGA isn't the only attack on the already inadequate facilities for women on the NHS. The Bruntsfield Hospital in Edinburgh, the only other general hospital in Britain run by women for women, is now waiting for the DHSS to decide whether or not it should close. Medical and surgical facilities have been withdrawn, leaving the 78 beds to be used only for gynaecology and geriatrics.

The Chelsea and Soho Hospitals for women are both threatened with closure.

A DHSS consultative document suggests that too large a share of resources goes into hospital maternity care and that by 1980 spending should be cut by 7%. But far from being too much spending on maternity services, there's not enough.

Women from North Cornwall, for instance, have to travel all the way to Plymouth, not only to give birth, but for ante-natal care. As a result of protest by women in the area, the NHS is now paying for hotel accommodation for them if they're rushed to hospital on a false alarm, to prevent induced births if they're kept in.□

The 'Women for the EGA' Committee have drafted a resolution which they are asking women's groups and organisations to sign, to show the strength of opposition to the closure. If your group could support the resolution, contact Linda Clarke, Save the EGA Campaign, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1 (01-388 0877).

Mother's Hospital to Close?

Five out of eight hospitals in Hackney, East London, face future closure — to be replaced in 1984 by one new hospital. The Area Health Authority is trying to get rapid agreement to close two of them — the Metropolitan and the Mother's — within months to balance the £½million 'overspent' in the district this year.

Sue Sharpe *reports:*

The Mother's Hospital is a purpose-built maternity hospital run by the Salvation Army. It has 16 wards and 101 beds and deals with well over 1,000 deliveries a year.

The plan for "rationalising the maternity services" in Hackney means closing the Mother's and moving it to the grimness of E block in Hackney Hospital — whose present maternity block is described by Hackney Trades Council as having "smeared walls, dirty windows and structurally unsafe Day Room"; whereas at least the Mother's is well-decorated and has pleasant grounds.

According to the AHA, "it is widely agreed that the obstetric services in Hackney are under-utilised and consequently expensive to maintain". But without the Mother's, women in Hackney have only the choice of maternity services at Hackney Hospital and possibly Barts, or going to a hospital outside the borough.

Hackney Trades Council is organising a campaign against these and other cuts. As one of the unhealthiest boroughs in London, Hackney needs all the health services it can get rather than having cuts in the already existing ones long before the resources for building alternatives are available.□



JACKIE WEST

BRISTOL: In the main shopping centre on July 31, women handed out over 1,000 leaflets explaining why abortion should be free on demand. Shoppers stopped to listen to feminist songs and look at the exhibition of photos, posters and charts.

It showed how the 1967 Abortion Act works (and fails) and how it is being attacked. And it explained how to go about getting a pregnancy test and abortion in Bristol.

Women from Bristol WACC (Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign) who worked on the exhibition with the local National Abortion Campaign group said: "All the time we were feeling our way towards how much information to give, how much people would read, how to make the whole effect exciting and attract attention (and of course be *tasteful*, the City Engineer was most insistent it should be tasteful!)."

They've already arranged to put the exhibition up in a local community centre, and hope it will be used widely.□

Contact them at the Women's Centre's new address: 44 The Grove, Bristol 1.

LIVERPOOL: SPACE ON THE STREETS

Merseyside Women's Group have finally won a year-long battle to get council permission for an information stall in one of Liverpool's shopping precincts.

At the City Council meeting in August, the former chairwoman of the Highways and Environment Committee, Councillor Doreen Jones, who'd had the power to consistently veto the women's group's application for a stall, was at last defeated. The Labour group and most of the Liberals voted against her.

The women's group wanted to leaflet the shopping precinct and to have a stall about women's rights. Cllr. Doreen Jones opposed them, saying abortion should be kept quiet and the leaflets would corrupt children. She was supported by Conservative councillors.

At August's council meeting her husband, who'd supported her all along the line, voted against her.

Doreen Jones lost the delegated powers she'd used to veto the women's application when the Liberals lost control of the Council in the May elections.□

NEWS COPY DATES

For *Spare Rib* 52 — Sept 17.
For *Spare Rib* 53 — Oct 14.
(If it's urgent, it's worth trying after these dates.)

HOME NEWS

'If it weren't for the Liverpool mums...'

"We are the Liverpool mums, working hard all day,
We do all the corpy's work, but the corpy gets the pay.
They say that we are hard-faced, so hard-faced we will be —
If it wasn't for the Liverpool mums, where would Liverpool be?"

This was the song that a group of women from the Netherley Flat Dwellers Association sang on a recent tenants demonstration in Liverpool.

400 tenants, mainly women and children, marched to stop the council changing the city's tenancy agreements — they planned to put the responsibility for maintenance of common areas of tower blocks onto the tenants.

This would have meant deterioration of housing standards in a city already renowned for its housing problems. It would have meant more work for the tenants, which would fall mainly on the housewives, sweeping stairways and lifts, clearing up the rubbish. And it would have led to redundancies among corporation maintenance workers, whose jobs are already under threat.

Opposition to this all-party proposal was organised throughout the city at local and delegated tenants meetings. Leaflets were handed out at all maintenance depots, pointing out that changing the tenancy agreements was part of the public spending cuts. As the song says, they want us to do the work for nothing.

Give and Take

The march involved a lot of tenants who had come in from outlying estates. At the town hall, flustered politicians announced that they had agreed to drop the proposal in the face of so much opposition. But at the same council meeting they agreed to put the rent up on all properties by 87p from September.

Many tenants also face increased fuel bills, which are part of their rent, so they have rises of up to £2 a week.

All round the city small fights are going on over housing conditions, against rent increases, for rehousing and better facilities for the kids. Tenants in Haigh Heights recently won their right to be rehoused while the flats are modernised (see *SR* 50). Tenants from two blocks in Everton adopted their tactics — barricading themselves in while insisting on rehousing.

The difficulty lies in coordinating the sporadic struggles, and finding ways in which people on estates can come out of the isolation of their own house or flat to fight with other tenants.

In Netherley, women active in the Flatdwellers Association decided to hold a carnival on the estate this summer to get the women together. Maria O'Reilly, one of the main organisers, said:

"The original idea came out of a series of demonstrations we had trying to improve conditions on the estate. We thought it would promote a community spirit. It has got women speaking to one another. People wouldn't come out of their homes before."□



BIG FLAME PHOTOS

Netherley Flat Dwellers on a recent tenants demonstration in Liverpool.



PATTI MAZELAN (IFL)

BIRMINGHAM: A hundred mothers have started a campaign against the proposed closure of Rea St nursery school.

The mothers of the children there have signed a petition against the closure and are threatening to sit in if the petition fails. A protest demonstration on July 8 was well-attended, and they plan more action next term.

The Education Department say they plan to move the nursery to two new units elsewhere. But parents and children want to keep the nursery they have — it's convenient, lively and has good facilities.□

RUBBISHY EXCUSE

WESTON-SUPER-MARE: The only refuge for battered women in the area is threatened with closure.

Ostensibly this is because of the lack of planning permission for the 'hostel use' of the building.

But since the refuge has been in operation for some time, Woodspring District Council's decision to take action now seems to be based on the complaints of *one* neighbour disturbed by "the noisy conduct of the inmates of this hostel, some of whom come and go at all hours . . . instances of men being brought to the hostel, of inmates calling out of the windows to men in the street, of unemptied dustbins with household rubbish overflowing onto the footpath."

These seem the flimsiest of excuses for closing down a refuge which houses five women and thirteen children. Perhaps the council might arrange instead for the emptying of the overflowing dustbins!□

BEATING THE BREADWINNER

When does a worker's family lose out altogether? When she's sick and trying to get benefits. But things may be changing. Last month a test case was won against the Supplementary Benefits Commission — they had to pay benefits to a wife-supported family.

A woman teacher who was supporting her child and teacher husband while he studied, fell sick. Now, although national insurance contributions are the same for both sexes, benefits are not; she got a married woman's lower rate and nothing for the family. They couldn't live on it.

They couldn't get supplementary benefits either. A woman can't apply if she lives with a man. Her husband was refused unless he registered for work. The refusal wasn't statutory, as in the case of his wife, but made under discretionary power. The Commission judged it unreasonable to award him benefits . . . because of the assumption in their basic regulations that only the man is the breadwinner — so he should get a job. A nice series of double-takes!

Quiet Victory

So he'd have had to stop studying, but the Child Poverty Action Group stepped in and appealed. They argued to the Supplementary Benefit's Tribunal that it was unreasonable to use their discretionary power in a way that discriminated between women and men. They couldn't attack the more basic legal discrimination going on, but they could here use reason!

The Tribunal, three untrained laypeople, although hesitant to go against the Commission, supported the family. And the benefit was paid . . . although, naturally, to the husband.

Does this mean that all families where the wife is the breadwinner can get benefits? Not if the Commission can help it. They've no intention of changing their policy or even of publicising the matter. For obvious reasons — scared and ignorant tribunals and public are their best allies.

So it rests with the CPAG and word of mouth to spread the news that a case has been won. Perhaps, with a bit more fighting of individual cases, precedent can turn into practice.□

Clare Cherrington

LESBIANS AND THE LORD

Action for Lesbian Parents have asked the Lord Chancellor to look into discrimination against lesbian mothers in court custody cases (see *SR* 50).

He has agreed to receive a delegation from ALP in October. Anyone who wants to help prepare for this — especially lawyers — please contact ALP c/o *Spare Rib*. Letters of support will help strengthen ALP's case.□

HOUSING IN GLASGOW: Paying Off Your Husband's Debts

Ms Smith has been separated from her husband for eight years. She's been living with Mr Reid for some time. Her former husband, Mr Smith, is living with another woman and they have young children. A few years ago Mr Smith and his new family incurred nearly £100 rent arrears.

Now Glasgow District Council are refusing to rehouse either Ms Smith or the man she's living with until they pay off her former husband's rent arrears.

Meanwhile *her* children are in care (at a cost of about £50 a week) till she can find a proper home for them.

Glasgow District Council have for years made it almost impossible for women who are separated from their husbands to find adequate housing for themselves and their children. And they're not alone — many other Scottish local authorities use similar tactics to stop women getting houses.

In Scotland 54% of families live in council housing — there's hardly any cheap rented accommodation left. Women who have left their husbands — perhaps after years of enforced economic dependence on them — can't usually afford to consider anything but council housing.

Yet many councils operate policies which effectively exclude these women from becoming council tenants.

Enforcing the Family

Glasgow Housing Committee have now decided to review their house-letting regulations. Various organisations will be submitting evidence to them, particularly about separated wives and housing.

But it may be difficult to get Glasgow establishment figures to rethink their assumption that families must be forced to remain together at all costs — and that any woman who tries to escape from an intolerable situation should be penalised or ignored.

This is reflected in their attitude to women whose husbands are already council tenants, and to women whose husbands owe rent to the council.

Glasgow's rationale for refusing to house the former is that the local authority cannot offer "two houses to the one family"! It makes no difference to them that the couple involved no longer exist as a family unit. There's not much a woman in this situation can do, because in Scotland there is no legal obligation on the council to help you even if you are homeless. (In England it's theoretically the responsibility of the Housing Department to provide accommodation — though not necessarily housing.)

Women whose husbands owe rent arrears are in a particularly bad situation because the council doesn't *refuse* to house them — as long as they pay off their husband's debts first.

A woman is not of course legally responsible for her husband's debts, but then neither has the council a duty to house her. So they use her desperate need for a place to live as a way of recouping money they're owed by other people.

It usually makes no difference whether or not she was living in the house when the arrears were incurred.□

Eveline Hunter

See 'Shortlist' p.25 for more on women and housing in Scotland.

In Glasgow, organisations like Shelter have recently tried to find out when the Housing Department would hold a woman responsible for her husband's rent arrears.

Look at the contradictions and cover-ups that followed:

17 SEPT 1975 — letter from the Director of Housing to the Glasgow Bar Assoc.
". . . it is not the practice of my Department to seek repayment of arrears of rent from wives of tenants who, for some reason or other, have vacated the house previously occupied by the family."

2 OCT 1975 — letter from the Deputy Director of Housing to Shelter
"If the arrears were incurred prior to the separation, the woman will be held liable . . ." But not otherwise.

9 FEB 1976 — letter from the Deputy Director of Administration
"I agree with you that the letters . . . are inconsistent with each other. The letter of Sept 17 is an accurate statement of the policy operated by the Housing Dept."

6 APRIL 1976 — council spokesman to the *Glasgow Herald*
"Women are not pressed to pay debts incurred while they were still living with their husbands . . . but there could be outposts in the city where this has happened accidentally."

26 JULY 1976 — letter from the Scottish Office at Whitehall
Hugh Brown, Under-Secretary for Housing *"understands that where a wife leaves the home and the husband continues as a tenant with rent arrears, the Council feel unable as a rule to offer her alternative accommodation."*

So the Council is unsure how to present itself in public. But their practice is clear — they refuse to house women whose husbands owe rent, even if the woman wasn't there when the arrears were incurred.

SHORTLIST

Please send information to Anny Brackx, Shortlist Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh St., London W1A 4XS.

events

Events are listed chronologically

Music Weekend
Planned to take place in Liverpool on September 17—19. Contact Jean Robb, Women's Centre, 49 Seel St, Liverpool for details (051-709 4141).

Preschool Playgroups
The annual conference of the Scottish Preschool Playgroup Association will be held on September 18/19 in Inverness. Details from Alice Newman, 8 Forss Rd, Thurso.

National Abortion Campaign Show
NAC will be holding a benefit show on September 19 at the Cambridge Theatre. Artists appearing include Glenda Jackson, Gay Brown and Frankie Armstrong. Contact NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1 for details (01-485 4303).

Feminist Painting
As part of the Covent Garden arts events, Monica Sjoo will be showing slides of her paintings. 8pm on September 21 at the ACME gallery, Shelton St, London WC2.

On Being Scientific
The Women and Science Collective will talk about problems of women relating to science, working in science and science applied to women's issues. At Essex Rd Women's Centre, 108 Essex Rd, London N1 (01-226 9936), on September 24 starting at 2.30pm.

Women And Doctors
Michele Barrett (Univ. of Hull) and Helen Roberts (Univ. of Exeter), who are working on a sociological analysis of women's consulting rates with GPs, will give a seminar on 'What Do Women Get From Their Doctors?'. On September 24, 7.30 at the Women's Research & Resources Centre, 158 North Gower St, London NW1 (01-388 0882 Tuesdays and Thursdays).

Our Bodies
The second Women & Health Conference will be in Manchester on September 25/26, a week earlier than originally announced. There will be workshops on the menopause, fighting the NHS and the medical profession, home births, local authority and well-woman clinics, nutrition, industrial diseases, compiling a women's health guide as well as room for self-examination and massage. Plans for an information centre and a health newsletter should also be discussed. If you are preparing a paper or want to do a workshop please inform Manchester Women's Health Group c/o Grass Roots Bookshop, 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester.

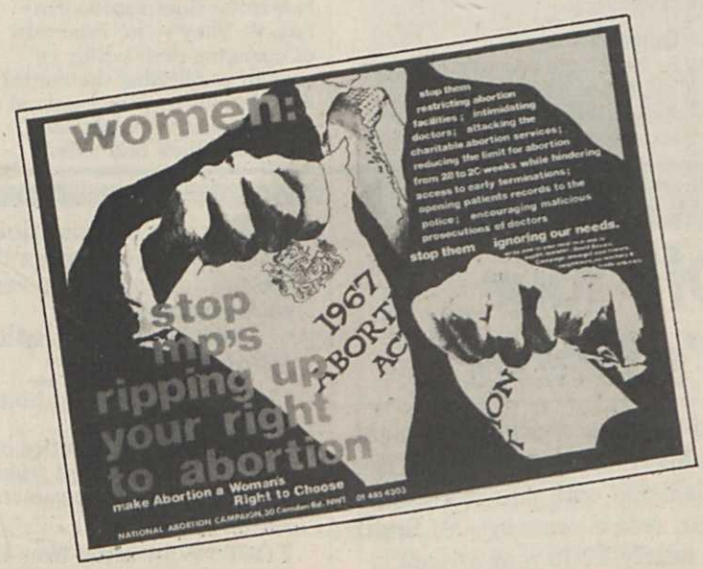
Sexual Politics
The International Socialists are organising a series of "education meetings" on sexual politics. The first takes place on September 30 and is on the oppression of gay workers; speaker Dave Widgery. The second one, introduced by Sybil Cock, is on Lesbians — the double oppression, and will take place on October 14. At the Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Rd, London WC1 at 7pm.

Paris Conference
An international socialist feminist conference has been planned for October in Paris. For information of planning meetings contact Barbara Yates, 10 Batoum Gardens, London W6 (01-212 5081 daytime). Women who have been working in specific campaigns are urged to write a report for the conference.

Non-Sexist Teaching
A Non-Sexist Teaching Day is being planned by the Women & Education Group for October 2 from 10am to 5pm at Manchester Teachers Centre, Barlow Moor Rd, Didsbury, Manchester. They want to concentrate on discussing practical approaches to non-sexist teaching and learning and are therefore inviting anyone (male or female) concerned with education. Registration (£1 and 50p to unwaged and students) will include conference reports. There will be a small extra charge for food. Details from the Women & Education Group c/o 4 Cliffdale Drive, Crumpsall, Manchester 8.

The Angolan Revolution
The Angola Solidarity Committee are organising a series of four discussion meetings on different aspects of revolution in Angola. The topic on October 8 is 'Women In Angola's Revolution'. The meetings take place in the Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Rd, London WC1, at 7.30pm and admission is free.

Women's Liberation Now And Then
On October 8 Olive Banks (Univ. of Leicester) will give a sociological interpretation of 19th and 20th century feminist movements at the WRRC as above.



Non-Violence
On October 15—17 there will be a conference on feminism and non-violence at the Birmingham Women's Centre. Contact Betty, 747a Stratford Rd, Birmingham 11.

A Socialist Perspective
All women around Cambridge involved in socialist groups are invited to a one-day workshop for the region to share ideas and to work out "a socialist perspective on the women's movement". Self-help health and the politics of servicing will be the main issues. The conference will take place on October 16. More information from Jo Bradley, 25 Alpha Rd, Cambridge CB4 3DQ (0223-59798).

A Woman's Right To Choose Concert
A folk concert with Frankie Armstrong, Saffron Summerfield, Jo-Ann Kelly and Carol Rumens at the Old Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton St, London WC2 on October 20. Tickets for this fundraising event are available at 80p in advance from A Woman's Right To Choose Campaign, 88a Islington High St, London N1 (01-359 5200/5209) or at £1 on the door.

Getting Into The Law
The Rights For Women Unit is planning two one-day courses, intended for trade unionists, social workers, citizen's advice bureau and law centre workers as well as lawyers. Equal pay and sex discrimination in employment will be dealt with under 'Advocacy in the Industrial Tribunal' on October 21; and sex discrimination in other areas (housing, education, credit facilities) on November 4 under 'Advocacy in the County Court'. Both courses will take place at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1, from 9.30am—5pm. The fee for one course is £16 and for both £30. Programmes from the Women's Rights Officer, National Council for Civil Liberties, 186 King's Cross Rd, London WC1X 9DE.

And More Law
Women in Media seminar on the working of the Sex Discrimination Act, to be held at Bedford College, Regent's Park, London NW1 (Tuke Hall) on October 23. Workshops on childcare, sexism in education, discrimination in jobs, protective legislation and the operation of the Equal Opportunities Commission. The fee is £3 per person, which includes buffet lunch, creche and tea. Apply to Women in Media, 103 Elgin Crescent, London W11.

Work
"We shall be discussing the increasing activity and demands for equal pay and opportunity, and the wider questions affecting women's ability to work — such as childcare, paid maternity leave, contraception and abortion and the effect of the present crisis on these struggles." A Communist Party conference on October 23/24 in Birmingham. Details from the Women's Department, CP, 16 King St, London WC2E 8HY.

Women in Eastern Europe
A working conference planned for October 30 at Birmingham University. "The idea is to bring together all who have a particular interest in this field". Written contributions should reach Barbara Holland, CREES, Birmingham University, Birmingham, before October 1. Papers will be circulated to all registering in advance (50p).

Linking Midlands Women
Birmingham Women's Liberation are coordinating a regional conference for October 30/31 in Centre 13, School Rd, Moseley, Birmingham 13. They are still open to suggestions but have in mind a weekend with workshops on art, music,

health, abortion as well as films, picnic and a disco. There will be a creche and accommodation and meals will be provided. Register in advance (£1.50).

Correction
In *Spare Rib* 49 (Reviews) Micheline Wandor said that Hughie Green compered 'New Faces' when, of course, he comperes 'Opportunity Knocks'.

campaigns

ALARM
A mixed umbrella group has recently formed in South London called ALARM (All Lambeth Anti Racialist Movement). South London women and men are invited to join. They would be interested to hear from groups in other areas, especially if they've produced leaflets showing the implications of fascism for women. Contact Alex or Helen, 7 Killieser Avenue, SW2 (01-671 2779).

Abortion
A Woman's Right To Choose Campaign has produced a couple of new pamphlets. *Women Your Body Belongs To You* which gives "practical information about women's rights under the Family Planning and Abortion Acts, words of advice and names and addresses of places to go other than your own GP". 4p on paper; 6p on card + postage.

New Research On Backstreet Abortion Figures gives a detailed analysis on the latest report produced by the "anti-abortion Select Committee", its implications and limits for action. 10p + postage.

Penelope Isn't Waiting Any More will be available at the end of September at £1.75. Songs on this LP, which Peggy Seeger is making for AWRTC, include her new *Nine Month Blues* (see *SR* 48) and *I'm Gonna Be An Engineer.*

Women: Stop MP's Ripping Up Your Right To Abortion is a poster available from the National Abortion Campaign as above. Price 5p + postage; also bulk rates.

Gay Social Workers
"Social work has traditionally been seen as a 'female profession' — yet our group can call on the support of very few women". The Gay Social Workers and Probation Officers Group will meet on October 3 and on the first Sunday of every month after that at 'Friend', 274 Upper St, London N1. They are mixed and meet to exchange ideas and experiences to reduce self-oppression. They also act as a pressure group with trade unions and professional organisations "to bring about a greater understanding of homosexuality".

centres

York
"York women's collective desperately seek help in establishing and running a much-needed women's centre. Guidance on legal, financial and organisational problems would be appreciated, especially accounts of direct experiences in other centres." Contact Shaila Shah, 9 Grosvenor Terrace, York.

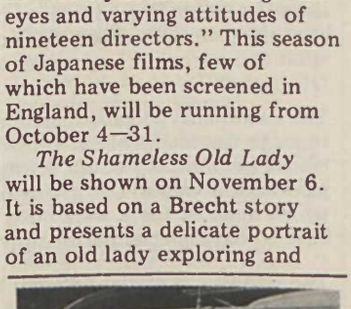
Hornsey
The Hornsey Women's Group have opened a women's centre at 147 Archway Rd, London N6. They have plans for starting a health group and want anyone who is interested in the centre to phone (01-340 6039) or to write.

Womanschool
Apart from already on-going courses and seminars (theatre, T'ai Chi Chuan, weaving, anthropology, poetry . . .), the Women's Free Arts Alliance is now arranging for a number of new workshops to start: self awareness through movement, African drumming, female sexuality, silkscreen and batik, video and more. Fees are kept as low as possible and range from 30p to £1 per session. Details from the WFAA, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1 (01-935 1841).

film

At The National Film Theatre
"The position of women in past and contemporary Japanese society as seen through the eyes and varying attitudes of nineteen directors." This season of Japanese films, few of which have been screened in England, will be running from October 4—31.

The Shameless Old Lady will be shown on November 6. It is based on a Brecht story and presents a delicate portrait of an old lady exploring and discovering the world for herself after her husband's death. NFT, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT (01-928 3232).



From *The Shameless Old Lady*

Unemployment: The Gaffer's Strike
The Newsreel Collective's latest film contains useful statistics and raises questions about the nature of work, the lack of it and the fight for money, work or no work. The employed and unemployed, men and women and young people speak for themselves. There are particularly good interviews with the women who were involved with the GEC strike (August—October 1974).

The Collective hopes the film will be used in the fight against unemployment. It is 35 mins. long, black and white, and can be hired for £9 from The Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2 (01-734 8508).

journals & articles

Charter Paper
The first issue of *Women's Charter*, the bi-monthly newspaper of the Working Women's Charter Campaign is out. It covers industrial disputes in which women have been involved and reports on the new legislation and various campaigns (nurseries, abortion and the fight to save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital). It also contains a supplement explaining what the charter is about. A package of useful information, but so densely printed that real dedication is needed to slog through it. Obtainable for 10p + postage from Jill Daniels, 16 Crookham Rd, London SW16.

pamphlets

Chilean Women No.2
Chilean Women No.2 deals with political prisoners. It is a testimony from a women's prison and how they started organising. It is published by the Chile Committee for Human Rights, 3 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 (01-935 5953).

Consciousness Raising
"After years of activity in the movement I realised that it was not until I did consciousness raising that I began to understand what sisterhood is all about. By this I mean putting women first." Sue Bruley describes how consciousness raising affected and changed her and the other women in the group.

There are sections on how her group started, its self imposed rules, the conflicts, and summaries of the topics that were discussed. But it would have been rather more convincing if she'd shown more of how the other women experienced the group — perhaps this would only have been possible if the pamphlet had been written collectively.


MARION CREZEE

Women Awake, The Experience of Consciousness Raising by Sue Bruley is available from 38 Hillfield Ave., London N8 at 25p + postage.

Women & Housing
"A guide for women to deal with the various options open to them" when trying to find a home, the pamphlet's main concern is with mothers (single, separated) and women, "victims of domestic violence". There are sections on council housing, the private sector and laws concerning tenants, buying with council loans, building society mortgages, co-ownership, rights to the matrimonial home, housing associations, squatting, and women's aid.

The information is based on Clydeside but is relevant to the whole of Scotland, where the situation is different from England, especially regarding the law: "in Scotland squatters have no right to occupy the premises they're living in". In their introduction the group make it clear that existing alternatives are inadequate and must be expanded. Also that plans for the development of new housing and rehabilitation of old stock should be made "on the basis of the real needs of all sectors of the community and not simply those of the stereotyped family".

Women and Housing, produced by the Glasgow Women's Legal and Financial Independence Group is available for 20p + postage from 53 St Vincent Crescent, Glasgow, Scotland.

Barbara Charles

FOREIGN NEWS



GAMMA

Rioting in Soweto, August 7

'THE BLACK GIANT IS GETTING UP OFF HER KNEES'

We wrote to a sister from Cape Town, South Africa, to ask if we could publish her letter on the letters page ('Cut Up Selected Men', p4). This was her reply —

Dear Sisters, 23/8/76

Thank you for your letter. Yes, do publish my letter but I would like my name changed, because right now things are pretty hot here as you probably know, and come to think of it, perhaps the letter is out of date now!

It looks as if the revolution has really started. Personally, I feel a sense of relief, like when a boil starts bursting, but it's also damn scary and I am having nightmares and I know that many of my sisters, both black and white, are experiencing the same relief and fear.

I recently helped an African sister by lending her my car to ferry food into the township where she lives, Guguletu, because the shop near her has been burnt down and the township was sealed off and no food vans were allowed in. Although she looked haggard from lack of sleep because of the turbulence in the township, her eyes glowed with a look I'd never seen before (I've known her for 12 years); she seemed more human and alive. I mean, I've always regarded her as human, but the hardness and coldness in her eyes was gone, and there was a positiveness and determination about her. A definite change has come over the blacks one meets now.

Protests and demonstrations have been catching fire from township to township throughout South Africa. Black so-called schools and universities, which are in reality nothing but brain-washing institutions, are being burned. Coloured people (i.e. people of mixed blood) are showing solidarity with the Africans and cries of black power are being heard from *all* people with darker pigmentation. This polarisation makes it 20 million against 4 million. The 20 million having right on their side.

Apparently the older generation are trying to restrain the younger generation but the younger people are no longer listening, according to various black people I've spoken to. They are saying to their elders — "You never did anything — and look what shit we're in!", or words to that effect, which isn't quite fair, but still . . .

The nationalist so-called leaders are making placating noises through the media about providing better housing for urban blacks (which they could provide for themselves if they were paid decent wages) and giving blacks tenure in urban areas, which most of them were born in anyway, and at the moment have to have special permission to remain and work in.

The Minister of Police, Jimmy Kruger, has appeared on TV and made statements about knowing who the agitators are and having everything under control. Typical patriarchal trip, control, suppress, manipulate.

But the black giant is getting up off her knees and what with the outside support of world opinion and the climate of the times, she is not going to be brought down flat on her face again.

But there's going to be a long hard struggle ahead and it's up to the few conscious feminists here to keep the ideals of the women's movement alive.

It is exciting to be a white South African at the moment but I know that there are going to be many times in the future, as there have been in the past when I'll wish to god I wasn't!

The black woman I mentioned earlier and I have decided that we will survive the revolution because we both have strong, long life-lines on our hands! Anyhow it gives one courage to think that way!

Love and sisterhood

Visit to an Italian health centre

Over the last two years, women in Italy have begun to organise massively for liberation. Strongest recently has been the struggle for free abortion and for women's health centres — consultori. *Here an English woman describes her visit to a* consultorio *in Turin, a big industrial city in the north of Italy.*

I arrived in the street I'd been directed to after a long hot tram ride through the city. The woman who had told me the way didn't remember the number. She said I'd know the *consultorio* when I saw it. This was an old working class district with blocks of flats and lots of women and kids on the streets.

The first likely building looked a bit official, like a Social Security office, but it said clinic on the door, so I asked the two women at the desk if this was the *consultorio.* They looked at my orange NAC badge which said "National Abortion Campaign — A Woman's Right to Choose" and asked what it was. When I explained, in my broken Italian, they were all smiles and warmth. "Ah, you want the *consultorio* . . . It's not here, it's a bit further down the road. You can't miss it."

The real *consultorio* was two tiny rooms with a few notices in the window — "Women's Clinic", "All Women Welcome".

The place was crowded that afternoon. Luckily the woman I'd arranged to meet spoke good English. Immediately everyone wanted to know who I was, what my badge was for, how our campaign for free abortion was going.

They showed me their kids, put their arms round me, and pointed out their flats through the window. This was their place. A place for women to come. For most of them it was the only place where they could be together and discuss their problems, husbands, kids with other women.

After a while, I sat down with the woman I had arranged to meet and she told me how the *consultorio* had been set up . . .

Not a Service

Two years ago, several women and women's groups in Turin got together to decide the best way to organise with women. Some were members of left groups, the rest weren't.

After long discussions, some of them decided to set up a women's health centre.

The health system is very poor in Italy. Contraception is expensive and hard to get; abortion is still illegal and in many cases, people are forced to pay for their own medicines in full.

The group picked an area with few facilities, old housing and a fairly stable community. They started with a general agreement that they weren't establishing a 'service to the community' — they were fighting women's oppression particularly through struggling for women to be able to control their own bodies.

They had four main principles:

1 To give away contraceptives free and make contraceptive advice central.
2 To try to break down the relationship between doctor and patient.
3 To try to establish a firm relationship with women in the area.
4 Not to do abortions (because it was illegal).

In the months after the *consultorio* opened in January 1975 the last two ideas had to be rethought.

Useless Do-Gooders?

The first to use the centre were feminists from all over Turin, wanting contraceptives and advice. (The *consultorio* still manages to get free supplies from different firms, though they don't know how long this will last.) After six months, the collective called a halt. They said it was a local centre, but local women were being kept away by all these others. Why didn't they set up *consultori* in other areas? (Since then four have started in Turin alone.)

But after this, local women still didn't come, even when all the flats, houses and shops had been leafletted. Quite soon they realised why — local women thought they were do-gooders, but useless because they didn't do abortions.

It's been so hard to get contraception in Italy that women have relied on back-street abortion. *Three million* illegal abortions *per year* is not an exaggeration. The collective soon realised that it was common for local women to have had three or four.

Eventually they decided they *had* to do abortions too. They contacted a midwife who had learned to use the Karman method (where a small tube is inserted into the neck of the womb and the contents sucked out by an aspirator). They explained how the *consultorio* worked, and she agreed to work with them and keep her prices low. They are also learning to do abortions themselves.

A few days later a woman well-known and -liked locally had an abortion there with the new method. Within a week, the whole neighbourhood had got the word.

How It Works

A collective of about 20 women run the *consultorio.* They open up in the mornings, run the sessions, keep the files and have weekly meetings. Two women doctors are part of this collective. (There is also one male doctor, the only man allowed in.)

When someone comes for advice, she is asked to come to the afternoon collective discussion.

This is a first attempt to get women to identify their problems as women together. It is often difficult as few have ever spoken out about their personal and sexual lives. The collective try to draw the new women out. The discussion may be about things in the news like a rape or a demonstration for abortion — or someone may want to ask the doctor for explanations and advice.

The woman I spoke to said this was often difficult — "When the doctor puts on his white coat, he takes on a lot of authority. The women have respect for him. We have to constantly challenge this. And in many cases, we know more than him now. We're so used to hearing about problems like 'Will the pill affect my liver?' But also we have to learn more ourselves. Some of us are taking courses in health so that we can do examinations too."

Seeing Inside

After this first talk, the group usually breaks up into twos or threes. With the women who need internal examination, the *consultorio* tries to avoid individual counselling. They ask one of the younger women, who is likely to be less inhibited about her body, if she objects to other women being ▶



LOTTA CONTINUA

present during her exam.

If she says it's OK, three or four women will be asked if they'd like to be present in preparation for their own 'internals'. "We don't ask everyone, because some would simply be frightened away. We realise that for some women it takes a long time to get used to the idea of even looking at your body."

So nearly every woman learns in a very practical and *social* way how a woman's body works. When the time comes for her to have an 'internal' (possibly the first she's ever had) it's less traumatic because she knows what to expect. And more important, she *understands* what is happening.

Most of the women didn't previously know much about their bodies. There is a constant emphasis on diagrams, charts and informal chats.

Many of the women then set up their own discussion groups, using the *consultorio* as a place to meet. And they're *all* asked to come back. Without this, it could easily become just a referral service with no continuity.

Other women who had taught themselves to do abortions told me later that they didn't want to run around town with their little black bags, seeing individual women in their kitchens, then disappearing. They wanted a



group or a centre to refer to, so that for any woman an abortion would just be the beginning of an involvement with other women. An involvement which could lead to women's power growing collectively and consciously.

I asked about the problems of illegality. They said so far there have been no raids from the police. For security, medical files are hidden elsewhere. But they felt that their strongest defence is that the police wouldn't dare disrupt something which has such strong support and involvement from so many local women.□

Marie Arnold
Big Flame Women's Group

HOW DID ULRIKE MEINHOF DIE?

Ulrike Meinhof may have been raped and murdered. This is the result of new documentary evidence



which has become available since she was found hanged in her prison cell on May 9 (see *SR* 48).

A member of a West German revolutionary group, Ulrike Meinhof was arrested in 1972 for armed attacks on state institutions and on US bases in Europe.

The German authorities claimed she had committed ▶ suicide; they gave conflicting versions of the way she was supposed to have hung herself, and removed the body hastily from prison for the official autopsy. Neither her friends, lawyers nor family had a chance to see the corpse.

Ulrike Meinhof's disbarred defence lawyer Klaus Croissant called her death "murder by instalment" through torturous prison conditions. While acting as an executor for her family, he was arrested once he found out facts about her death that indicated rape and murder rather than suicide.

The new evidence is based on the findings of the two autopsies carried out on her corpse. The official one was done straightaway by two medical experts, in the presence of a judge and public prosecutor. It mentions a positive test for seminal fluid together with bruises on the legs, often found with rape victims.

At the request of the family, a second autopsy was carried out two days later by Professors Janssen and Schroeder. They received the corpse in an incomplete state so were unable to give a full reconstruction of what had happened.

Strangulation?

Both reports have since been reviewed by medical experts in other countries (including England) who found that contrary to the official conclusions, the circumstances of the death known so far and the actual injuries point to strangulation rather than hanging.

While the typical symptoms for hanging (i.e. dislocation of the upper cervical spine, haemorrages in the conjunctivae of the eyes, protrusion of the eyes and tongue, blue discoloration of the face) are missing, the actual symptoms make sense in connection with strangling. And as for a sexual attack, it seems to emerge from the reports that she wasn't dressed at the time of her death.

Is her death due to pressure applied to her neck by another person? And was there an actual or attempted sexual assault? These two questions will be discussed at a conference organised by the German Writers' Association, who intend to ask for an international investigation. They need support to get even minimal publicity for issues connected with political prisoners in West Germany. People will have to deal with the questions: who did it? and how?□

Karin Monte

POISON: PRICE OF AN ABORTION

SEVESO: A cloud of dense dioxin gas had to contaminate a whole area before any Italian women could get even partially legal abortions.

On July 10 a safety valve burst at Seveso's Icmesa chemical factory — owned by Hoffman-La Roche, peddlers of Valium and Librium (see p:21). A poison cloud forced thousands of people to evacuate the area. All vegetation is to be burnt.

Some 279 pregnant women were subjected to the gas, which can seriously damage foetuses. The Minister of Health gave grudging permission for them to have 'therapeutic' abortions, and on August 13 three did, despite strong opposition from the Vatican, who thought they should be forced to have deformed babies, then get them adopted if it upset them.□

FRANCE: Speak out on Rape

3,000 French women came together in Paris on June 26 to talk about rape. It had been four years since feminists of different groups had met. The time was right.

The French rape laws, and their application, are similar to those of most other countries, perpetuating the myth of the provocative but submissive and masochistic female craving for the uncontrollable, virile male.

In France rape is a criminal act but sexual violence is called rape only when penetration of a non-consenting person takes place. In other words, a woman has to go through the humiliation of proving that she has been penetrated (objective proofs are a torn vagina or traces of sperm) and that she did not consent (you are consenting if you give in with a knife at your throat).

In practice most cases of rape are tried in the equivalent of our magistrates courts as minor acts of violence.

The fight to have rape recognised as a physical and psychological crime against women started in September last year, when a group of feminists demonstrated outside a magistrates court in Marseille. Three men were on trial for injuring two women while camping — in fact they had raped them.

Dance and Debate

What can we do against rape? Should we use repressive state institutions against our oppressors? Does the solution lie in learning methods of self-defence or in setting up vigilante groups?

In order to discuss those questions the 'Ten Hours Against Rape' conference was organised and a manifesto drawn up. It accuses men of sexual imperialism and lashes out at both conservatives and radicals.

"On the right they tell us that rape is committed by immigrants, by the emotionally disturbed, by the mentally ▶

MONEY NEWS



JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)

SW Area Labour Party women's organisation sent a delegation to Parliament on August 3 to lobby Tony Wedgewood Benn over the Child Benefit scheme.

No Compromise on Child Benefits

It looks as if the government will run into more trouble than it bargained for over its betrayal of the Child Benefit Scheme, which would have meant some slight economic independence for married women with children.

As reported in *Spare Rib* 49, they'd long promised to convert the father's tax allowance into child benefit payments made direct to the mother. But suddenly this summer they reneged, proposing instead taxable weekly payments of only £1 for the first and £1.50 for each subsequent child . . . a symbolic handout instead of the real thing.

Anger at the switch has resulted in a compromise proposal by a joint TUC-Labour Party working party. They want the weekly payments to be tax free, and an equivalent reduction made in the father's tax allowance. This would be altered annually until by 1979 the full amount of the benefit would have shifted from father to mother, as in the original scheme. But the Child Benefits Now Campaign reject this compromise and are fighting for the whole deal at once.

The campaign is concentrating on the big autumn conferences of the TUC and Labour Party. There'll be a meeting at each, with leafletting to show how the average family will profit more from the original scheme, and that the compromise is not enough.

With most of the energy going into these conferences, Child Benefits Now is not really a mass campaign yet. The emphasis is on signing the petition, and there'll be a march and rally when it's presented in November.☐

Petitions, car stickers, badges and leaflets available from 1 Macklin St, London WC2.

FARE ENOUGH

We need cheaper, more comfortable and frequent public transport services, said the Labour Party in its 1966 election manifesto.

And what has happened? Tube fares recently went up 26% which means a total rise of 116% over the last eighteen months. But this time there has been some resistance to the increase — a campaign called Fare Fight, which now has about 5,000 people involved.

What you do is buy a 10p ticket at the start of your journey and hand it in at the other end, along with a deferred payment slip stating the stations you travelled between and your name and address. In simple terms what you are doing is opening a credit account with London Transport — and it's all legal!

Under LT byelaws it is only illegal to travel on the tubes with "the intent to avoid payment". The 10p ticket and the slip prove that you are willing to pay. It's hoped that so many people will use the slips that it will take years for LT to get round to asking people for the money they owe.

Picking on Women

So far, there have been a few cases of illegal harrassment of Fare Fighters. It often seems to be young women with kids who are picked on:

"I got threatened by an Inspector at Ladbroke Grove Tube station. I'm sure it was because I had a young child and a push chair with me, which meant I was almost the last person off the train to hand in my ticket. I was shouted at, and the Inspector said he'd get the police if I didn't pay. I was so frightened that I did pay just to get out of trouble . . ."

The campaign aims to make it as easy as possible for people to get involved. There are leaflets explaining the legal situation, instructions on how to fly post for those who haven't done it before, and a regular mailing to everyone involved so they know what's going on.

Write for slips and information to Fare Fight, Flat 3, 76 Sidney St, London E1 (01-790 9965).

retarded and the sex maniacs. On the left they tell us that rape is a product of sexual deprivation and that we should continue to endure rape as part of the common struggle against oppression."

The anger and sadness at the hypocrisy of these attitudes reached its peak in the conference, when one rape victim gave an account of her experiences with doctors, police and the judge, who treated her as guilty (of being a woman?) when they heard that her rapist had been a civil engineer.

"Every man is a potential rapist. Rape is not a chance event. It is an expression of the permanent violence done to women by a patriarchal society."

But how can we fight it? The discussion was fierce and passionate. Few new things were said and hardly any conclusions were reached. It is difficult to talk about rape in a big hall, and nerve-wracking to talk in front of 3,000 women. After two hours of chaotic debate the women started dancing, feeling uncontained, at ease, secure in the trust of each other.

Some thought that nothing tangible came out of the conference, no concrete resolutions, and that rape is a serious business and should not be a pretext to have a ball. For most it was the culmination of a year's struggle and a re-energising experience for the long march to come.☐

Anny Brackx

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Wives will be able to charge their husbands with rape if the new Anti-Rape Bill becomes law.

The State Government has introduced the legislation so that rape victims can bring charges against their attackers without fear of further prosecution under the law.

South Australia's Attorney-General explained his government's move: "We believe a woman ought to have protection against rape regardless of who the rapist is — whether it is her husband or not."

One of the Bill's opponents, the leader of the Opposition, believes "it could exacerbate already strained relations between married people".

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know more about them and their use than most.

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The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for personal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality from very good to absolutely useless. We have been selling the same model for seven years and have enough confidence in it to offer you our special 'money refund' service if you are not satisfied.

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EVENTS

7:84 Theatre Co. perform their new play OUR LAND: OUR LIVES Oct 1, 7.30pm Stoke Newington Town Hall, Stoke Newington Church St, N16. Tickets £1 (claimants 50p) From 4 Painsthorpe Rd, N16 Presented by Hackney Communist Party.

SISTERS MARCH AGAINST RACIALISM Assemble Ridney Rd, corner of Colvestone Crescent, 2pm Sept 18th. March to Stamford Hill. Bring your banners. Bring your friends. Organized by Hackney Communist Party.

THERAPY

PRIMAL THERAPY write Jenny James, Atlantis, Burtonport, Letterkenny, Co Donegal, Eire

SEXUALITY AND YOU A group for and about women. Starts 22 September. For details contact: Quaesitor, 187 Walm Lane, NW2. 01-452 8489

Woman Psychotherapist (Jungian) Tel 01-348 5593 preferably before 10am

PERSONAL

Companion (platonic) sought for occasional outings, by female (48), London. Sense of humour; likes music, history, walking. Box 512

GIRL, 19, would love to meet similar. Interested: discotheques and general companionship. Box 513

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YOUNG MAN needs to meet ladies still interested in young men. London address. Box 514

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Man (39) without ideals/principles being sued for divorce needs a mate with or without child/principles/brown skin, etc. Write to J Bardwaj, 35 Ascot Rd, Luton, Beds.

Homosexual? Lesbian? Problems? Ring the women at FRIEND to talk it over. Tuesdays, Fridays, 7.30pm–10.00pm on 01-359 7371

FOR SALE

HESSIAN BAGS with Lib Symbol. Limited offer £1.75 plus 10p post. Annette, 25 Cromer Rd, Romford, Essex

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Helpers needed for Women's Aid Refuge in Southampton. Phone Jane 23347

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A VACANCY OCCURS FOR AN ASSISTANT WARDEN at a Home Office approved Bail Hostel. The work has a strong social work bias entailing close liaison with the Probation Service, Courts and allied agencies. The person selected will have a responsible and positive approach to the project working as a member of a team. An attractive salary applies. Applications are invited from persons 25/35 years. Qualifications/relevant experience required. In first instance apply in writing to: Richard Ford, 9 Cologne Rd, SW11 2AH, enclosing fullest c.v.

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GROUPS

Women interested in women's centre for S.E. London inbetween Bromley and Croydon. Premises available. Pam 01-677 2667 days.

Feminist teacher wants to start or join women's group in Slough area. Slough 84807

Want group in Fillam area, women or mixed for feminist/political studies. Ring Viveka 381-2546 eves.

All women welcome to open meeting in October (West London) to learn about feminist consciousness raising. Phone for details: (day) Jo: 602 1469. (Eve) Debby: 579 5470; Dinah: 998 6405; Flora: 427 2885; Kathy: 567 7848; Sallie: 567 7043; Su: 579 4971.

Mabel

IS LOOKING FOR YOU . . .

Mabel is Australia's first feminist newspaper. She's looking for news/stories/photos/poems from England. She's looking for readers all over the world. For subs. write to Mabel, 62 Regent St., Chippendale, 2008 N.S.W., Australia.

MABEL HAS MANY SISTERS!

COURSES

Women's studies evening course starting September in Harrow. Contact Betty 427 2885

Feminist History Courses starting September. Barbara Taylor-Women's History in the 19th century at Essex Rd Women's Centre. Sally Alex-Women in the 20th century at Working Men's College, Crowndale Rd, NW1. Anna Davin-Childhood in History at City Lit., Stukeley St, WC2 and British Society of History at Morley College, Lambeth. For details ring Sally 828 3735

Small lively group needs new members. Rugby womens group, tel: 71021.

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WOMEN'S LIBERATION WORKSHOP (Women's Information and Newsletter Service), 38 Earlham St, London WC2 (01-836 6081). Open usually 12–10pm weekdays, 12–6 Sat. Feminist information centre and meeting place. Books and publications, women's groups, referral services, coffee room, meeting rooms, resident film and art groups. Weekly newsletter (including calendar). Subscription 15p a copy, 10p at the Workshop. Run by an open collective. For women only.

THE GIRLS' GUIDE – 1976 FOR GAY WOMEN. Annual pocket size international bar/club guide and complete directory. This third edition: 2000 listings/40 countires, £2.00 only from THE GIRLS' GUIDE, 1 North End Rd, London W14 (mail order only–one week delivery). Also at: Sterling's Bookstore, WC2 and Symposium Bookstore, 12 Market St, Brighton

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WIRES is the National Women's Liberation Information and Referral Service. Send all your information and queries to us and keep in touch with the movement by subscribing to the newsletter (twice monthly). Rates: individual subs £5 a year (£3 for poorer sisters); Group subs £3 a quarter – 6 newsletters. £12 a year; each additional newsletter 50p for 3 months supply. Send cheques/POs and donations payable to WIRES c/o 30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2. T: LDS 35561 (just ask for WIRES, it's a shared phone).

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A course of 24 weekly meetings on Wednesdays 7.30–9.30pm in the Public Library, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.
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Every sex maniac should get it

It's bound smooth and brown, yet very slim and handy. ($6\frac{3}{4}$" x $3\frac{1}{4}$"). This 1977 Sex Maniac's Diary is made for the 1977 Sex Maniac to whip from the pocket or handbag and refer to at anytime during the day or night.

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Another reply to our request for people to write about their attempts to understand and change personal relationships

Coming Out To My Mother

By Julia Wright

I was becoming more and more concerned whether my mother knew that I was a lesbian. A couple of years ago I had told my father that I was in love with a woman and he had said, "We always knew you were 'like that'." He did say *we* so I took it that my two sisters and mother knew. My sisters might just as well have not known because I never talked to them as though they had accepted I was a lesbian. But one of them sometimes mixed in my circles which meant she must have been aware of it. I rarely saw my younger sister and didn't plan to, so I decided it wasn't important to relate my lesbianism to her. With my mother it was a very different situation. I had moved into a squat close by where my parents lived and I knew that from time to time my mother would drop in on me. This meant she would meet almost all the other lesbians in the area. I also felt more and more concerned that though I was a 35-year-old woman, my mother viewed me as a child; less than a child in some ways because to her I was not a sexual person. She didn't relate to me as a lesbian. In her eyes I had no sexual identity.

I thought a lot about whether I should just come out with it straight! I even got a plan together. I had just read *Sappho Was a Right-On Woman* by Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love, in which a young American lesbian carried a placard on a demo which read, "Hey, Ma, I'm a lesbian." She carried it on the demo so that the TV cameras would pick up on it and her mother would see it and find out. I very busily made a beautiful placard in bright orange and yellow with the letters outlined in black saying, "HEY MUM I'M A LESBIAN". I put the placard on the wall in my bedroom knowing that my mother usually wandered around my squat and sooner or later would wander into my bedroom. The day came, but as I heard her going up the stairs to my bedroom, I pushed past her, rushed into the room and grabbed the placard from the wall. A much older friend had told me that she would have been hurt if a daughter of hers had used a placard like that. As she was a mum herself she may have been right — anyway I couldn't go through with it. But I didn't feel either that I could talk to her and tell her that I was a lesbian. I remembered, as so many of us do, that the word lesbian meant/still means nasty things. Why should I expect it to mean anything else to my mother?

However, I realised it was important that she should find out *who* I am. I had never "talked" really honestly with her when certain kinds of questions came up and I decided that this had to stop. If she knew *who* I was, then she was capable herself of putting a name to it if she wanted to, or felt happy to. From then on I was very aware of just how often I had avoided certain questions, or changed the conversation, or just hadn't said things at all.

One day my mother said to me, "Why do so many of your friends live with other women?" My honesty came out, "Because they like each other a lot," I said.

On another occasion I called by when she was watching horse racing on TV. She had put money on a horse called Gaypride. It won the race. "I wish I'd known about that horse," I said, "I'd have backed it." "But how would you have backed it," she said, "you don't know anything about race horses." "No," I replied, "but I know about being gay." It got easier and easier to respond in this straightforward manner.

Another time she wanted to know why I had split up with my very nice girlfriend with whom I'd lived for the past seven years. I had a very pleasant home with her and my mother thought it was madness on my part to leave. I simply said, "There's more and other things in a relationship, aren't there?" She answered, "I suppose so," in a thoughtful way.

Then, a few weeks later, she suddenly announced that she wished I had spent that weekend with them at their holiday caravan because, "there were two women there who were gay like you." Clearly she had liked them and so wanted me to know about them.

She had come to use the word gay by herself, just as she came to the idea of what we mean by lesbianism by herself.

We were making some plans to have a singsong one evening and asked her if she'd play the piano. She agreed with a joke — 'We wouldn't all think she was a lesbian too, would we?' We said we'd make her a badge saying, "I'm not a lesbian," and she laughed. I had not used the word lesbian with her at all. She had chosen it for herself.

Now she has started to drop in on me at home, and she is relaxed and friendly, and we use the word lesbian and she is unconcerned. I should point out that my mother is a very working class woman; she had no idea about lesbianism other than from plays she may have seen on TV, or from things she read in the newspaper, or from stories she had been told. She isn't a liberal woman generally.

I should also tell you that my relationship with her, right up to the point of my straightforwardness, was not a good one. We could not communicate with each other; our relationship was cold, we never joked together, couldn't relax with each other. Now it's changing, we have begun talking.□

Why not *Slip* into *Something* a little more *Comfortable*

Lisa Tickner

shows how in the last century women did just this.



A picnic in crinolines

"Woman's dress, too — how perfectly it describes her condition! . . . from the bonnet string to the paper shoe, she is the hopeless martyr to the inventions of some Parisian imp of fashion. Her tight waist and long, trailing skirts deprive her of all freedom of breath and motion. No wonder man prescribes her sphere. She needs his aid at every turn. He must help her up stairs and down, in the carriage and out, on the horse, up the hill, over the ditch and fence, and thus teach her the poetry of dependence."

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1857

After the relative freedom of the Regency period, Victorian woman found herself again restricted to quite a severe degree by at least three different aspects of her fashionable dress: by the dignity and expansive graciousness of her heavy skirts, and later crinoline, which hampered her movements and slowed her gait; by the very low set sleeve which prevented her from raising her arms; and by the tightly laced corset which assisted the display of an 18" waist, restricted her lungs, displaced her internal organs, caused her to faint in warm or tiring circumstances, and generally endangered her health.

Fashionable women's clothing had of course been both cumbersome and restricting in the past: no Victorian crinoline was any more ridiculous than the Elizabethan farthingale, or the 18th century panniers it resembled; but the very impracticality of court dress contributed to its ceremonial and hierarchical effect. Far larger numbers of middle class women, and even cooks and housemaids, were now struggling to survive the day's activities whilst blinkered by their bonnets, trussed up in their corsets, and surrounded by petticoats and whalebone hoops which had to be squeezed through doorways, cautiously manoeuvred up and down staircases, and perched precariously on the edges of armless chairs.

Throughout the 19th century the criticisms grew, as women realised that their dress was completely unsuitable for anything but the most limited social role. It was no exaggeration to speak of skirts sweeping the streets. Paxton's specially invented floor cleaners were apparently not required at the Great Exhibition after all — the floors were kept swept and polished by the ladies' trains; and there are many other comments and anecdotes which refer to the dust they raised and the piles of litter left at the kerb by a skirt and train as the wearer stepped into a carriage after a short walk.

The artist G.F. Watts emphasizing the selfishness endemic in fashionable female dress pointed out that it also prevented women from functioning properly. Crinolines and trains were extravagant in form, inconvenient for the wearer and inconsiderate of others. Tight sleeves and gloves made arms and fingers look like rigid sausages, useless for clasping the hand of another in friendship, or for snatching a child suddenly out of danger. But the point was that women were not expected to move quickly or freely, nor to shake hands with vigour, but to combine dignity with delicacy in crinolines and trains which set off the fragility of a narrow waist and tiny hands and feet.

The clothing worn by all the newly fashionable sections of society was so exaggerated that it provoked an almost unique phenomenon: a deliberate, and sporadically organised attempt to reform dress and even to abolish the vagaries of fashion itself. Why, as Lady Harberton put it, should it be supposed *"That the male form came perfect from the hands of the Creator, while that of the female needs constant tinkering and screwing into shape to make it presentable?"*

Raising these kinds of questions meant taking on a much wider issue than the cut of a sleeve or the length of a hem, and so the movement for dress reform was inevitably and intricately bound up with the development of 19th century feminism, although not always in an entirely predictable manner. To struggle for women's rights — a fight already under way in the 1850s and 1860s — was by definition to reject the whole contemporary concept of femininity, since ladies did not 'fight' for anything. It was also, and almost automatically, to invite the accusation of 'unwomanliness', which was the alleged consequence of the hardening influences of public life.

The 'strong-minded' or 'platform' woman was the Victorian equivalent of the modern media image of the bigoted, and bra-burning 'libber'. Both were convenient stereotypes, identikit pictures to which few if any actual people approximated, which served as a warning backed up by the implied threat of social disapproval and even ostracism. Just as the popular contemporary picture of the feminist is fixed at scruffy denims, a generally unkempt and (in media terms) unappetising appearance, so the Victorian platform woman was illustrated in *Punch* with short hair and dark, severely tailored, masculine clothing.

REVOLTED WOMEN 1894



The Bloomer

There are isolated instances of 19th century women, like George Sand and Helen Weber, who were courageous, extrovert, and perhaps desperate enough to adopt for everyday wear a modified version of masculine dress. Nevertheless, it was hardly likely that in the face of social ostracism, a large number of women would suddenly do so. A less dramatic but a more influential decision was that reached by Elizabeth Smith Miller, working long hours in her garden during the spring of 1851:

"I became so thoroughly disgusted with the long skirt, that the dissatisfaction, the growth of years, suddenly ripened into the decision that this shackle should no longer be endured. The resolution was at once put into practice. Turkish trousers to the ankle, with a skirt reaching some four inches below the knee, were substituted for the heavy, untidy, exasperating old garment."

She had spent her honeymoon travelling through Europe, and according to other accounts was influenced by the clothing worn in Swiss sanatoria, where women were recovering from the effects of tight lacing, and the lack of physical exercise. Shortly afterwards, she went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in Seneca Falls, and Mrs Stanton copied the new costume with immediate delight, feeling as she wore it "like a captive set free from his ball and chain".

"The question is no longer, rags *how do you look?*
But woman, *how do you feel?"*

Amelia Bloomer was a neighbour and involved in editing the feminist/temperance magazine *Lily:*

"At the outset, I had no idea of fully adopting the style; no thought of setting a fashion; no thought that my action would create an excitement throughout the civilised world, and give to the style my name and the credit due to Mrs Miller. This was all the work of the Press. I stood amazed at the furore I had unwittingly created."

The circulation of the *Lily* increased dramatically, and women from all parts of America wrote for details of the pattern. The *Times* quoted from Amelia's article in the May issue of *Lily* under the heading "A Lady Resolved To Be Free And Easy"; the *Illustrated London News* published a picture of her in the new costume in July; and soon Bloomers were seen in England: at the Crystal Palace, in Piccadilly, and even on six wax models at Madame Tussauds.



LEECH, *PUNCH* 1846

In February 1853, Amelia Bloomer attracted over 3,000 people to a temperance meeting and the *New York Tribune* correspondent described the dress which made her famous:

"Mrs Bloomer was attired in a dark-brown changeable tunic with a kilt descending to just below her knees, the skirt of which was trimmed with rows of black velvet. Her pantaloons were of the same texture and trimmed in the same style. She wore gaiters. Her head-dress was cherry and black. Her dress had a large, open corsage, with bands of velvet over the white chemisette in which was fixed a diamond stud pin. She wore flowing sleeves, tight under-sleeves, and black mitts. Her whole attire was both rich and plain in appearance."

Most of the dresses were made with loose waists and no whalebone, and this kind of scrupulous attention to style and trimming seems to have been part of a conscious effort to forestall the criticism aroused by something otherwise so unconventional.

The Bloomer became notorious, and for the popular press, the topic of the year. Small Staffordshire china figures of Amelia were manufactured; there were at least three farces in West End theatres; a Bloomer polka, waltzes and

John Leech drew a whole series of rather feminine role-reversal 'Bloomer' cartoons for *Punch* 1846



No. VI.—*SOMETHING MORE OF BLOOMERISM.*

(BEHIND THE COUNTER THERE IS ONE OF THE "INFERIOR ANIMALS")

quadrilles; and the costume was mercilessly lampooned, in *Punch* and elsewhere, by those who had in the previous months bemoaned instead the stupidity of women's trailing skirts. Satirical cartoons, rhymes and music-hall sketches on role-reversal flourished: Bloomerism in the ballroom, with women asking men to dance, and Bloomered women 'popping the question', joining the police force, or smoking tobacco. This was the exposing of a raw nerve. Victorian society, even more rigidly than our own, believed the separate roles of men and women to be distinctive, and 'complementary'. For a woman to display initiative outside the home, to express opinions, to hope for a measure of independence, or to suggest any of these by the adoption of 'masculine' attire, was to threaten the natural balance of male and female, and with it the whole social structure.

"*As the husband, shall the wife be. He will have to wear a gown*
If he does not quickly make her put her Bloomer shortcoat down."

Despite all this, the Bloomer was never intended to appear masculine. The costume of an oriental harem was hardly a suitable source for progressive reform, but trousers or breeches had for so long been worn exclusively by men that they had become the visible symbol of masculine domination. *That* was why the few women who dared adopt them provoked heated accusations of unwomanliness and gross immodesty. The Bloomer represented a real, though short-lived challenge to the standards of conventional dress, and by implication to the values of contemporary society. It was significant because of the publicity it received; because it became by association a kind of feminist battle dress for women like Sarah and Angeline Grimke, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone; but most of all because it grew out of women's own consciousness of what restricted them and how they might be free.

Ironically, these were the very same factors which prevented it from being taken up on a more serious scale.

"*If the Bloomer dress had come from a Paris milliner, it would have been welcomed in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; but . . . it is the only dress which has ever been adopted from principle* — from a desire in woman to fit herself for daily duty."

But in the end, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton observed, the "tyranny of custom" was so strong,

"*that to escape constant observation, criticism, ridicule, and persecution, one after another gladly went back to the old slavery, and sacrificed freedom of movement to repose. I have never wondered since that the Chinese women allow their daughters' feet to be encased in iron shoes, nor that the Hindoo widows walk calmly to the funeral pyre.*"

The originator of the costume (Elizabeth Smith Miller) gave it up after six or seven years; and so did Amelia Bloomer, who was sufficiently tired of the expense and inconvenience of keeping up two wardrobes to adopt the crinoline, believing that

"*my influence would be greater in the dress ordinarily worn by women than in the one I was wearing.*"

In various statements she made it quite clear that she was a feminist first and on principle, and a dress reformer second, and for the sake of personal convenience. She wrote,

"*we all felt that the dress was drawing attention from what we thought to be of far greater importance — the question of woman's right to better education, to a wider field of employment, to better remuneration for her labour, and to the ballot for the protection of her rights. In the minds of some people the short dress and woman's rights were inseparably connected. With us, the dress was but an incident, and we were not willing to sacrifice greater questions to it.*"



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Reform Movements

Long after the bloomer costume had itself been dropped, a general interest in dress reform continued. The subject was discussed at a convention in Syracuse in 1857, and at the 1868 Council of German Women in Stuttgart, where a motion was passed in favour of a "reform in dress" which would resist the "tyranny and vagaries of fashion". However, it was not really until the 1870s that there were consistent and organized attempts at reform.

By this point there were three separate precedents for an alternative convention: a long tradition of medical invective against tight lacing, which stretched right back (through Rousseau), to German physicians of the mid-18th century; the example of the Bloomer costume of 1851/2; and in England the eccentrically picturesque and often quasi-mediaeval clothing common in some artistic circles, worn particularly by the Pre-Raphaelite women — Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddal, Jane Morris, and Effie Ruskin. A modified version of this sort of clothing, usually a little fussier and more self-conscious, formed the basis of 'Aesthetic Dress'; lampooned by *Punch* and in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*, and commercially produced by the newly established Liberty's in the later 1870s and 1880s.



ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS 1886

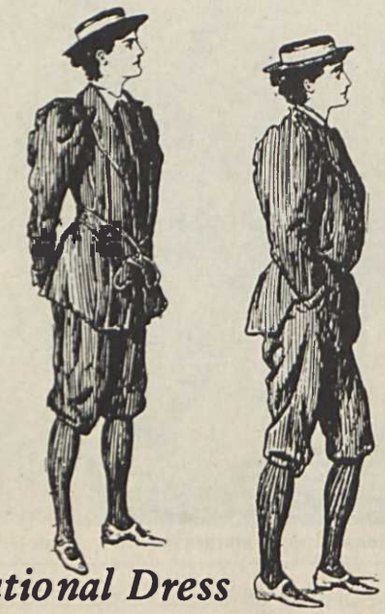
Some intrepid women carried on regardless

Meanwhile the fashionable silhouette had itself been changing: the symmetrical crinoline was suddenly abandoned in 1868, and replaced almost immediately by the misleadingly named "Watteau Toilette". This demanded a "Grecian" or "S"-bend posture from the wearer, the breasts thrust forward, the buttocks pushed back and emphasized with a mass of bunched-up fabric and ribbons. As Stella Mary Newton shows, by the late 1880s the image of woman had become

"*compact and smooth as a hedgerow bird and as distinct in outline . . . her dress . . . gave no hint of soft flesh beneath, curiously utilitarian. The vulnerable nakedness was compressed into a mould that looked resistant, as the blackbird looks resistant. It was this woman, rather than the melting artistic lady, who really proclaimed, with a cool precision, the victory of her sex.*"

Fashion is here unconsciously reflecting the changing social circumstances of women, whilst simultaneously restricting and inhibiting the individual concerned. Aesthetic dress in its loose floppiness and Liberty prints, although physically liberating, is visually associated with a traditional femininity, whilst the image of fashionable dress implies a new toughness and capability despite its conventionally repressive construction.

PUNCH 1896



Rational Dress

An interest in dress reform continued into the 1880s and 1890s. In England the Rational Dress Society was founded in 1881, as the result of a meeting between Viscountess Harberton and Mrs E.M. King, both of whom were already interested in clothing reform and had written independently on the subject. Lady Harberton herself was firmly in favour of trousers, if necessary in combination with a skirt.

"The trouser is not only more comfortable, healthy and clean, but also more decent . . . The prevailing idea of decency, which exposes the whole of the upper part of a woman's body for the mere sake of display when she is in full dress, but shrouds her legs in layer upon layer of material is a very strange one, and it is time that it was altered. Let us combine to do this ladies, and prove to the world that union is strength."

In 1883 the Rational Dress Society mounted an exhibition in Piccadilly and contributed to the clothing section of the International Health Exhibition the following year.

The couturier Worth is supposed to have designed a costume for one of its members consisting of knee breeches and a short full skirt half-way between waist and knee, together with a blouse frilled at neck, wrists and hem. But more typical was the commercial view expressed in a trade journal that "there is no need for a woman to be able to do more than use her limbs in a feminine fashion." The aim of the Rational Dress Society was, in contrast, "to promote the adoption, according to the individual taste and convenience, of a style of dress based upon considerations of health, comfort and beauty and to deprecate constant changes of fashion that cannot be recommended on any of these grounds."

The society was anxious to emphasize that it advocated a reformed, and not a masculine dress for women. For those who did not wish to adopt divided skirts, divided petticoats were recommended. But even these provoked the *Lancet* in 1879 into speaking out against "bifurcated garments". Medical reformers on the whole had very conventional views about the nature and status of women; though in favour of healthier wives and mothers they could not conceive of any basic alteration to the status quo.

By the 1890s the diffuse influences of Romantic socialism and Kate Greenaway nostalgia contributed to an enthusiasm for picturesque outlines and humble materials, much embellished with hand embroidery. This fashion, although not particularly logical, expressed the mingled socialist and artistic preoccupations peculiar to certain late 19th century circles. The new graceful, healthy and rational dress became the uniform of a wealthy and artistic clique; and rebellion was transformed into style. Perhaps it could be argued that a point had been made, and some degree of relaxation achieved? For the less conventional, possibly; for the followers of high fashion, not at all. Artistic dress was robbed of its power to change, by its adoption as an optional fantasy. Late Victorian and Edwardian corsets were as tightly laced as they had ever been. The fashionable Lily Langtry figure was a buxom and artificial 38-18-38. The hobble skirt was still to come (see *Spare Rib* 47).

For all the effort, it is hard to say who or what was finally responsible for the end of the corset: the feminists, the doctors, Paul Poiret (for so he claimed), the craze for bicycling, or the first World War. And one further question remains unanswered. If clothes are a useful expression of social rebellion, are they a wise one?

Amelia Bloomer was throughout her life an active and influential champion of women's emancipation, but she never considered her clothing a significant part of her political stance, and tactfully switched to skirts when she addressed the Nebraska legislature. Some writers have assumed that her costume gave the cause "great impetus, and advanced the fulfillment of its aims by many years"; others, that it damaged the furtherance of female suffrage for the rest of the century. Certainly this controversy of ends and means was discussed at the time. Should women (or any other group struggling for social change) adopt the uniform of an 'emancipated' dress, or stay relatively unobtrusive? Was it to be the role of the uniformed soldier, or of the secret agent? Perhaps there was then, and remains now, a need for both.

In the photographs that I have seen, the Pankhursts wear fashionable and not 'artistic' or 'rational' clothing. But my own sympathies are with Ada Ballin, who summed up for the opposing view in 1885:

"tight lacing must be banished from the mind and body of the woman who would ride the iron steed."

She meant the bicycle: but it is quite a good metaphor for life.□

Lisa Tickner

This is the last article in the series. If you would like a list of books for further reading, send an s.a.e. to Fashion List, Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS.

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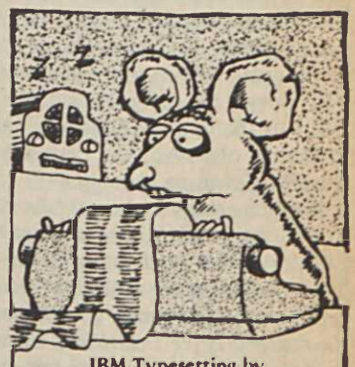
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reviews

BOOKS

THE SILBURY TREASURE

The great goddess rediscovered

by Michael Dames
(Thames & Hudson, £5.50)

After reading this book I feel that anyone who lives within easy reach of Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, should just go there.

A strange prehistoric mound, it rises 130 feet out of the valley of the river Kennett (Cunnit?). Even though it was meticulously constructed its actual purpose has long been a mystery. Stone age people were in no position just to build follies, particularly a solid chalk hill in the midst of natural chalk hills, just for the fun of it.

Archaeologists and others have thought and hoped that Silbury was the enormous tomb of a warrior king. In 1968, BBC2 recorded an excavation to the centre of the hill, expecting to display the buried treasures of Silbury. All they found was a tall, sealed, cylindrical pot, embedded in the very heart of the hill, containing neatly packaged mementoes of the 1849 excavation.

Michael Dames has looked for a very different kind of treasure — a symbol of harmony and fertility, more suited to an age when the people were 'simple farmers' growing wheat and barley and raising oxen, pigs and sheep — in other words Silbury as the Great Goddess, pregnant and about to give birth. Is Dames just cashing in on a great goddess revival? No, it was Silbury itself that aroused his imagination.

"The Silbury elements and meanings emerge most effectively when the visitor stands on the specially provided observation terrace around the summit. Indeed the 'messages' can only be really understood by being physically experienced, as might be expected of a structure built at a time when the female principle was exalted. The hugeness of the womb is understood best by attempting to run up its 30 degree slope . . . At Silbury one may experience the architecture of huge body turning into even huger head, of mighty antler, and throbbing eyeball (or is it the sound of one's own heart beating from the climb? One is not sure and that, the merging of subject and object, is the point). The treasure, including the intellectual daring, is presented freely, at first hand, given to the touch . . . Silbury is architecture, wet and dry, and was built to be physically explored by the people who streamed across the causeways and descended the steps into the moat, or spread across the belly wall."



Silbury hill — the great goddess?

In this book Dames has drawn together a fantastic web of symbols and sources that can not just be reduced to the fine illustrations. Does it really matter whether or not his thoroughly researched theory is right? Inspired like Silbury by something more than science, he shows that many of our society's most accepted values and assumptions are, fortunately, not immutable. If, by reviewing this book, I'm accused of escapism, of wistfully looking back at a golden age of 2500 BC, from the top of Silbury Hill, I can only say that it's really excited and inspired me and I'm on my way.

Rose Ades

WOMAN–WORK

Women and the Party in Revolutionary China

by Delia Davin
(Clarendon Press, £5.95)

I read most of this book during the spell of extremely hot weather in June and July. For most people, reading a serious and scholarly book is difficult at the best of times; for me the hot weather meant an extra effort but this also served to throw the strong and weak points of the book into much sharper relief.

There were several things I liked about it. First it contains a tremendous amount of information about the lives of Chinese women beginning with the time of the organisation of the first Soviet base areas in 1930 and continuing almost to the present. Delia Davin has drawn on hundreds of sources including contemporary newspapers, documents and letters, and provides us with a mass of evidence of the ways in which attitudes towards women and the work they do have changed as well as of the great variety of their experiences and activities at any one place and time.

The book is very well structured around the themes of women's organisations, marriage and the family and the lives of women in the countryside and town. This enables the reader to look at the ways in which women have increased their knowledge, experience and skills, thereby acquiring new, more effective methods of changing their lives. There is much interesting information about the relative importance of changes in legislation, party policy, women's organisations and women's participation in the work-force and the resulting effects on women's daily lives.

Nevertheless, I finished the book without its having given me much *feeling* about the process of change or how so much change in women's lives had been possible in such a short time. Revolution is very much about what happens to your spirit and your guts, and therefore about what gives you the energy to change. I would have liked to have seen more attention paid to the effects of struggle on individual women's lives. Perhaps the only way to do this would have been to include some rather lengthy quotes from women describing their experiences in their own words. Women's work changes when women's power changes and you only really gain power when you've fought for it yourself.

I would also have liked more attention to have been paid to the role of the Chinese Communist Party and the ways in which it provided the political framework and specific goals within which women's struggles ▶

took place. Central to this is the tremendous trust put in the abilities of the masses of ordinary people to learn from the experience of their own struggles. The book needed more material which shows how this trust in the people was essential to their progress.

Finally, I was left with the impression from the material in the book that the revolution was entirely solemn, heavy and difficult. It doesn't capture the other side, the achievement, the humour, the joy and optimism which the struggles also created. Without these, the energy to make a revolution could never have been sustained.

Kathy West

THEATRE

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A valiant and sometimes intriguing theatrical effort to link together an indictment of mental hospital treatment (Laingian and drugs) and the story of a woman trying to break out of her domestic role. With two kids, and a husband who insists she follow him where his job leads, she is torn between the demands of the family, her desire to paint and her work in a community centre. Eventually the pressures wear her down and she commits herself as a voluntary patient to a mental hospital — only to find that getting in is far easier than getting out. There are some tense moments — a satirical gloss on psychiatric training, and some sharp exchanges between husband and wife; but the play is stylistically uneven, though this will probably iron itself out in performance. However, it is interesting and ambitious, and worth seeing if it comes your way.

KINFLICKS
by Lisa Alther
(Chatto & Windus, £4.95)

Kinflicks arrives with amazing reviews from the States, promising everything and then begins unreadably. But once the action begins, Ginny, the Southern heroine, never stops moving. The narrative of her riotous and oversexed youth, from boyfriends to lesbian lover, to doomed marriage, is told between visits to her mother who is dying in a small town hospital.

The strongest points of the book are the mother-daughter sequences, the ruthless honesty and continuous humour. At one moment husband and wife hang suspended by a single handcuff from a beam in the living room, stark naked and stuck. Lured on by sex literature, her husband had hoped to thereby excite her to orgasm — but her arm hurt, and he dropped the key to the handcuffs . . .

If there wasn't so much humour, the sadness might hurt, for Ginny is always losing. Flung into college by her father, to get her out of small town romances, she is persuaded to drop out by a lesbian revolutionary, and when that ends in tragedy, she falls into a doomed marriage.



It's the story of a woman pushed around by circumstances — an anti-heroine, if you like. At the end Ginny gets a chance to choose her fate. But her mother only sees at the approach of death that Life's given her nothing for herself. She rebels . . . here, arguing with the nurse over her medicine:

' "That's right. I'm not taking it any more."

"But Mrs Babcock, this isn't *like* you."

"How do *you* know what I'm like?" '

The confrontations between the spoilt, rebellious Ginny and her fast-changing, sickening mother, have the same brutal realism. Slowly they find common ground, and a turning point in their relationship comes when her mother doesn't tell Ginny her duty lies in returning to her husband and child.

Unfortunately, there are some really annoying things in the book. A continuous stream of psychologising and explaining, with a slightly preacherly quality, leaves a reader little room to breathe or get curious about the characters. There's no suspense, and a manic preoccupation to report on everything that's happening, and towards the end it gets boring.

More disturbingly, Lisa Alther's treatment of anything beyond individuals and relationships is mostly caricature. This approach to the movements of the late 1950s and 60s — the radicals, women's movement, communes, etc. — leads to sensationalism, not depth. Yet maybe this lack of contact with society spells out a basic theme of alienation in *Kinflicks*, with a heroine who lives off dividends and never has to work. Ginny has no gut-level reaction to a society she's cut off from, and seems often to live in a world of her own. However, *Kinflicks'* amoral honesty is refreshing. Original and funny, its good points certainly outweigh the bad.

Clare Cherrington

LESBIAN IMAGES
by Jane Rule
(Peter Davies, £3.90)

This book is, in the author's own words, "a common reader — or not so common reader — a statement of my own attitude towards lesbian experience as measured against images made by other women writers in their work and/or lives . . . For anyone who wants to know what it is to be a lesbian, this book offers as many answers as there are voices to speak."

The autobiographical opening chapters show why Jane



EXHIBITION

Mary Kelly and her son, aged 2½, in a recording session for *Post Partum Document*, an exhibition at the ICA New Gallery from September 23—October 16. "In the *Post Partum Document* I'm trying to show the reciprocity of the process of socialisation in the first few years of life. It is not only the infant whose future personality is formed at this crucial moment but also the mother whose 'feminine' psychology is sealed by the sexual division of labour in childcare."

There will be a seminar on Women and Psychoanalysis on October 13 at 7pm in the Gallery at the ICA, Pall Mall, London.







Rule is not so much bothered with literary judgements as with exploring the images, in a pretty straightforward pictorial sense, of lesbians, put forward by women writers in fiction and (auto)biography. She writes out of a need to clarify ideas for herself; to discover of what, if any, tradition of lesbian writers she is a part. She parades for us overtly lesbian writers like Radclyffe Hall, Gertrude Stein and Violette Leduc, lesser knowns like Willa Cather and Dorothy Baker, and includes Ivy Compton-Burnett, on the grounds that her long-standing, celibate relationship with Margaret Jourdain was lesbian "if one calls the relationship between Leonard and Virginia Woolf hetero-sexual". Although she promises to examine the interaction of writers with their culture, to see how they are influenced by religious and psychological ideas as well as their own experiences, she, in fact, concentrates on giving simple biographical details and synopses of plots.

Jane Rule argues that being a lesbian is of no more import than being left-handed: all that matters is being able to love. Well, yes, except that lesbians are not allowed by society openly to express themselves in their own way. While I found her basic material fascinating, her biologistic approach to herself — born lesbian — carries over into the rest of the book and seems always to prevent her from developing any really interesting ideas. That apart, I recommend it to anyone who wants an introduction to lesbian writing.

Michele Roberts

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Margaux Hemingway and Anne Bancroft in *Lipstick*

BOOK for children

'Breasts like women come in all shapes and sizes.' From *What's Happening To Me* by Peter Mayle and Arthur Robins (LSP £3.95). Rather American and at times sexist, this is the *only* available book on puberty.

Funny and not patronising, it's suitable for 7-year-olds upwards.□



SPREAD SPARE RIB AROUND

Change Of Life?

What makes the menopause? Does it really mean a change of life? What can Hormone Replacement Therapy do for us? ***Jane Barker*** *and* ***Rosie Graham*** *of the* ***Essex Road Women's Health Group****, following up their article in* ***Spare Rib*** *47 on periods, answer questions about the menopause.*

Women's fertility comes to an end because we are born with all our eggs inside us. And like the rest of our body, our ovaries grow old.

In the normal menstrual cycle (*Spare Rib* 47), the pituitary gland in the brain sends a messager, Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH), to the ovary. There it tells a follicle (sac of cells) containing an egg to grow and develop.

With age the follicle fails to respond to FSH. The eggs don't develop and the follicle doesn't produce enough of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone for the lining of the womb to grow. Our periods then stop as there is no lining to be shed.

When eggs and the accompanying oestrogen are no longer produced in the ovaries, another gland, the adrenal, takes over as the main producer of oestrogen so even after the menopause, oestrogen is present, but at lower levels, in our bodies.

Do periods stop suddenly? Periods can stop suddenly or become irregular, changing in amount until they stop altogether.

When does this happen? On average around the age of 50. Some women's periods stop much earlier, some later. They may become more irregular for just a few months or for several years before they stop.

What if you've had a hysterectomy? If you've had your womb only removed, your periods stop. This *isn't* the menopause since you've still got ovaries producing eggs and hormones, and you'll have the menopause at the normal time. Sometimes though, the shock of the operation can make the ovaries stop working, producing early 'artificial' menopause.

What if you've had your ovaries removed? If you've had *both* ovaries removed, your body will experience a sudden drop in oestrogen and you'll go through an artificial menopause. You will probably be given oestrogen treatment by your doctor.

Can you still get pregnant? Contraception is needed for two years after your periods have stopped in case an egg develops. Remember that the pill isn't healthy for women over the age of 40, so use durex, the cap or the coil. The coil should be removed two years after the last period, otherwise it may get embedded and be very hard to remove.

What about sex? Just because periods stop, there's no need to stop having sex, unless you want to. If you have enjoyed sex, the menopause needn't bring any change to that enjoyment. Women can experience sex in a more relaxed way since there is no fear of pregnancy or need for contraception. Some women complain of sexual difficulties during the menopause. Sometimes the dryness of the vagina (see below) can make penetra- ▶

tion of the vagina, and rubbing and touching the clitoris, painful, but general lubricating creams like KY jelly from the chemist can be put in the vagina and around the clitoris to overcome this. Do not use vaseline.

Sometimes though, the 'change' can bring about the first opportunities a woman may have had to talk about sexual problems. One woman went to her doctor saying that she didn't like sex with her husband any more, but it turned out that it had always been difficult as her husband had premature ejaculation. It may also be the first opportunity for a woman to discover non-vaginal sex, such as clitoral stimulation and other ways of stimulation.

Doesn't a drop in oestrogen affect sexual drive? There's no direct correlation between oestrogen and sexual desire.

Hot flushes — what causes them? These are sudden intense waves of heat which start at the chest and spread over the neck and face and are often accompanied by sweating. They may or may not be visible to other people. Some women wake in the night drenched with sweat. They are believed to be caused by a combination of a low or fluctuating oestrogen level and an excess of follicle stimulating hormone.

"Suddenly, without warning, my temperature seemed to skyrocket about 100 degrees. It wasn't the sensation of standing in front of an open oven, as some have described it, but the breathless feeling of having stayed in a hot bath too long. I was hot, I was wet and I was breathless. The book said 'hot flushes' were named by a woman. They had to be, the name is so accurate. How to describe them — like a wash of wet heat; unexpected, unwanted and uncontrollable."

What changes occur in the vagina and womb? The walls of the vagina become thinner, drier and less elastic (vaginal atrophy). The acidity of the vagina can change, making it more open to infection. The womb (uterus) shrinks and the bladder walls grow thinner, leading to a weaker bladder so that we have to urinate more often.

Why do menopausal women easily break bones? After the menopause women are more likely than men of the same age to fracture their bones as our bones start to lose calcium and become more brittle, fragile (osteoporosis) and susceptible to fractures. The calcium loss from our bones appears to be linked to the fall in oestrogen level.

Do all women have emotional difficulties? *Some* women may experience some of the following: lack of concentration, lack of energy and weakness, nervousness, nausea, increasing insomnia, depression. These feelings are just as likely to be due to other changes in a woman's life at this time, and it isn't known whether they are directly linked to the fall in oestrogen.

Often this is the time when our children are leaving home and we may feel redundant and unwanted. It is the final closing of the door for the childless woman who may have wanted children, it's often difficult for middle aged women to get jobs as employers discriminate against us, and our parents may die during this time of our life.

Women have to cope with all these changes in a society where middle aged women have little status. Our society values youth and prettiness above everything else in women; when our periods stop we may feel we are getting old and no longer desirable and attractive.

These could be the real causes of depression and the physical changes taking place can be an opportunity for admitting it. Though physical changes themselves can, of course, be depressing, e.g. hot flushes, dry vagina.

What can we do to help ourselves? From a ten year study in New York, it seems that taking regular doses of calcium and vitamin D from middle age onwards can prevent a lack of calcium in our bones, so the bones remain strong. The standard British preparation is Calcium with Vit.D tablets, BPC. A suitable daily dose would be two tablets. If the calcium and Vitamin D intake is stopped the bones become brittle again.

Regular exercise helps to keep our bodies healthy and our bones from deteriorating. This doesn't mean 100 press-ups or 60 knee bends a day! But we can include karate, swimming, yoga, cycling, walking, dancing, judo, fucking. Good posture also helps prevent bumpy spines which may equally be due to bad posture as to calcium loss.

A good diet affects your health and how you feel. As we grow older we need less *calories* in our daily life but we still need important minerals, vitamins and proteins.

Before the menopause, non-smoking women are unlikely to have a coronary (heart attack), but afterwards women are almost as likely to have one as men, so it's wise to cut down on animal fats and use more vegetable oils, e.g. corn, sunflower, sesame or olive oils. Milk, dairy products, eggs and similar all have a high cholesterol level and the higher your cholesterol level the more chance there is of a heart attack.

Fibrous foods, such as fruit, raw vegetables, bran, whole grain breads and cereals prevent constipation and keep our bowels healthy.

There is also a drug called Clonidene, which can be taken in low doses (marketed as 'Dixarit') to help prevent hot flushes and sweats. Dixarit is also used for the prevention of migraine. In higher doses Clonidene (marketed as 'Catapres') is used for lowering blood pressure. Although Dixarit seems to be a relatively safe drug, it has been known to cause or to intensify depression.

Vaginal dryness and shrinking can be helped by using the lubricant KY jelly which can be bought without a prescription. Alternatively a GP can prescribe vaginal cream/pessaries which contain oestrogen. These stop the vagina thinning and getting dry which is caused by lack of oestrogen. Oestrogen applied directly in the vagina is only absorbed in very small amounts into the rest of the body (see below). Women should be aware that no long term research has been carried out on the effects of oestrogen pessaries on the vagina so it's impossible to know whether or not there are any harmful side effects.

Since many of the feelings and emotions we have at this time are not just related to physical changes we feel it is important for women to be able to talk to each other, compare notes and discuss feelings, worries and fears, and provide mutual support at a time when maybe we are feeling vulnerable and insecure.

If any woman is interested in starting groups to meet with other menopausal women, they can write to Essex Road Women's Health Group and we will put women in contact with each other. (*Please* send a stamped, addressed envelope!)

"The unpalatable truth must be faced that all post menopausal women are castrates."
From doctor carrying out research on HRT

How does the medical profession view the menopause? The medical profession has at last begun to take an interest in the menopause (perhaps because the drug companies have as well

and are providing help with research). Lots of doctors still dismiss problems as "it's your age dear" or prescribe tranquilisers and anti-depressants which do not reach to the roots of either the physical or emotional changes and feelings.

There are a growing number of doctors who see the menopause as a 'deficiency disease' (the deficiency being oestrogen). The oestrogen that is no longer produced by the ovaries is replaced in order to get rid of or reduce some of the menopausal symptoms like hot flushes, etc. This treatment is called Hormone Replacement Therapy or HRT.

Most of this treatment is in an experimental stage and research is still being carried out on the different dosages, types of oestrogen to use, etc. There has not been enough long term research to know exactly what the long term effects of oestrogen replacement therapy are on women. We feel it is up to each individual woman to make up her own mind whether or not to have this treatment, knowing the possible advantages and risks that are involved.

"Prospect of universal treatment of a large section of the female population is clearly a glittering prize for the pharmaceutical manufacturer." Lancet, June 7 1975

What are the benefits of Hormone Replacement Therapy?
* It relieves hot flushes and night sweats but low levels of oestrogen alone are not the cause of these (see above). Forty per cent of women who have taken placebos (pills without any drugs in them) while being told that the pills reduce hot flushes have in fact found their hot flushes reduced, while nearly all women having HRT have their hot flushes reduced.
* It reduces shrinkage and dryness of the vagina and maintains the tissues around the vagina and muscles and skin generally. Women can either take oestrogen pills or put oestrogen pessaries into the vagina.
* It seems that it may reduce calcium loss from the bones (osteoporosis) and theoretically it should reduce the chance of fractures. This has not been proven conclusively as yet.

How is it taken? It is taken by swallowing pills containing oestrogen or oestrogen and progesteren or oestrogen plus other hormones, usually for three weeks, then a week off, then for three weeks again, etc. Oestrogen causes the lining of the womb to build up and the 'week off' results in an artificial period when women shed the lining of the womb, so although her own periods may be finished, she will start to have some kind of 'period' under HRT. This usually stops, or anyway gets much less, after some months.

There is a higher chance of having cancer of the endometrium (lining of the womb) at this age and it is thought that by having a 'period' any cancerous cells present in the endometrium will be shed.

What are the risks involved in having HRT? The dosage of oestrogen used is usually lower than that used in the contraceptive pill but they both have similar risks. It appears that oestrogen can increase the risk of (i) blood clotting — thromboembolism, (ii) high blood pressure, (iii) the medical profession is still debating whether HRT increases the risk of cancer of the endometrium, (iv) oestrogen can stimulate the growth of hormone dependent tumours although it doesn't seem to *cause* them.

Are there any side effects of HRT? Some women may experience some, or none, of the following: breast or leg discomfort, nausea, headaches, weight gain, fluid retention or breakthrough bleeding. Any unexpected post menopausal bleeding needs investigation so as to exclude the possibility of cancer of the endometrium. It may be necessary to have a scrape (D&C) so the wall of the womb can be looked at.

Are there women who shouldn't have HRT? If you have any of the following it is unwise to have HRT: diabetes, hypertension, a history of thromboembolic (blood clotting) disease, liver dysfunction, gall bladder disease, hormone dependent tumours, obesity.

How can we get HRT? HRT can be obtained from your doctor but many GPs may be ill-informed or anti-HRT. In that case, get a letter from your GP referring you to a NHS menopause clinic at a hospital, usually attached to the Department of Gynaecology and Obstetrics. Since HRT is still experimental it is better to go to a clinic as you should be carefully tested and supervised. They should determine that any symptoms you have could be *caused* by oestrogen deficiency or what type of oestrogen is likely to get rid of your symptoms (oestrogen is a general name; oestriol, oestradiol valerate are oestrogens just as rose, blue-bell are flowers!)

Some doctors can be understanding and sympathetic to women during the menopause years but many will dismiss problems as "it's just nature, you'll get over it". Conscientious doctors may have carefully studied HRT (GPs don't have any special training in gynaecology) and will find out if hormone deficiency could be the *cause* of the problem and prescribe accordingly to the individual woman's needs, but there's the danger that others may have succumbed to advertising and instead of doling out valium to depressed middle aged women, it'll be oestrogen instead.

"I have found life after 53 and the menopause very similar to life before 53 and the menopause."

For years the medical profession has regarded 'women's complaints' as trivial, be it vaginal infections, pre-menstrual tension or the menopause. The social problems of being a woman responsible for kids, trying to make ends meet, trying to live up to society's expectations of a woman, can cause anxiety and depression and are met with a prescription for valium or other tranquilizers.

Few doctors, let alone educational establishments, tell us how we can prevent health problems or how we can treat ourselves. Lots of things which can occur at the menopause can be helped by ourselves; simple treatments, sharing our problems and supporting each other.□

No Change — A Biological Revolution for Women *by Wendy Cooper (Hutchinson, 1975). This looks at the menopause and HRT (very much in favour of HRT).*

Housewife *by Ann Oakley (Alan Lane, 1975). A sociologist writes about housewives, including middle aged women whose children are leaving home.*

Women's Health Care *c/o Joan Jenkins, 7 Coniston Court, Carlton Drive, London SW15 2BZ. Tel: 01-788 2733. Women's Health Care is a non-profit making association set up to publicise information about HRT for menopausal women. They do not provide information on other forms of treatment. They send you lists of private and NHS Menopause Clinics in Britain and a pamphlet produced by a drug company on the menopause and HRT.*

Essex Road Women's Health Group, *108a Essex Road, London N1. Tel: 01-226 9936 (Mondays 3.00—6.30pm), have more detailed information on the menopause and will put women in contact with other menopausal women.*

Fairy tales are part of our traditional heritage. Enough said. Merseyside Women's Liberation Group *believe that our society won't be fundamentally changed while children's imaginations are imprisoned by its myths. So they tampered beautifully with some of them and came up with a collection which will please people of all ages. We proudly present:*

Snow White

High above a far off kingdom, carved into the rock of a mountainside, there once stood a mighty castle. It was so high that the people working on the distant plain could look up and see it among the clouds and when they saw it they trembled, for it was the castle of the cruel and powerful Queen of the Mountains.

The Queen of the Mountains had ten thousand soldiers at her command. She sat upon a throne of marble dressed in robes weighed down with glittering jewels, and holding in her hand a magic mirror. This mirror could answer any question the Queen asked it and in it the Queen could see what was happening anywhere in her kingdom. When she looked into the mirror and saw any of her subjects doing things which displeased her she sent soldiers to punish them.

Night and day her soldiers stood guard on the walls of the castle and every day they watched as people from all over the kingdom toiled up the steep pathway carrying heavy loads: iron to shoe the royal horses; weapons to arm the royal soldiers; food to be cooked in the royal kitchens; cloth to clothe the royal servants. The procession wound on and on up the mountainside to the castle. The people were carrying with them all the useful and beautiful things that had been made in the kingdom, for everything they made belonged to the Queen and they were allowed to keep only what was left over or spoiled.

No one could save anything from the Queen of the Mountains for no place was hidden from her magic mirror. Every day the riches of the kingdom were brought to her and every night she asked the mirror:

"Mirror, mirror in my hand,
Who is happiest in the land?"

Then in a silvery voice the mirror always replied:

"Queen, all bow to your command,
You are the happiest in the land."

And the Queen would smile.

One day, among the procession climbing the steep path to the castle were a pale little girl called Snow White and seven little men, dwarfs, even smaller than her. Snow White and the dwarfs were carrying between them a heavy chest bound with metal bands. They had travelled all the way from the diamond mines beside the distant sea. There, far underground, often in danger, they and many other men, women and children worked long and weary hours. Every year they must send a chestful of diamonds to the Queen of the Mountains or they would be cruelly punished.

When the other people in the procession reached the castle gates the lovely things they had been carrying were taken from them and they were sent away, but Snow White and the seven dwarfs were surrounded by soldiers and brought to the throne room of the Queen herself.

"Open the chest," ordered the Queen as they bowed low before her.

Two dwarfs lifted the lid. The chest was full of glittering diamonds and on top of them lay a necklace shaped like branches of ice. The Queen held the necklace up to the light.

"Did you make this?" she asked Snow White.

"Yes Majesty," said the girl.

"It is well made," said the Queen. *"You are to stay in the castle as a jewellery maker."*

Snow White's pale cheeks turned red and she opened her mouth to cry *"No!"* but each of the seven dwarfs put a crooked finger to his lips, warning her to be silent.

"Take her to the workshop!" ordered the Queen.

The soldiers led Snow White and the dwarfs out of the throne room and up a twisting stairway to a small room at the top of a tower. In the room there was a work bench with jeweller's tools laid out on it. All around the walls, stored in tall glass jars, gleamed jewels of many colours: amethysts, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, topaz. Little light came through the one small window but the jewels shone so brightly that when Snow White looked at them her eyes were dazzled and her head began to ache.

Snow White and the dwarfs took the diamonds from the chest and put them into empty glass jars. Then, one by one, the seven little men kissed Snow White goodbye. There were tears in their eyes for she was their dearest friend. They shouldered the empty chest and went slowly down the twisting staircase.

"You are very lucky," said one of the soldiers to Snow White. *"You will no longer be poor and lead a hard life toiling underground in the mine. Here servants will wait on you. You will sleep in a soft, scented bed and be brought whatever delicious food and drink you want. And, if the Queen is especially pleased with your work she will give you rich rewards."*

"But my friends will still be toiling in the mine," said Snow White and her heart felt like a stone with sorrow.

In the long days and weeks which followed Snow White grew more and more skilful at making beautiful pieces of jewellery out of the precious stones and metals in the workshop. The jewellery pleased the Queen of the Mountains. One evening she summoned Snow White to the throne room.

"This brooch pleases me," said the Queen. *"You may choose a reward."*

"Oh, Majesty," answered Snow White, falling on her knees, *"please let me go home."*

The Queen was angry. She turned her mirror towards Snow White and in it the little girl could see the dwarfs and all her

other friends digging in the mine and dragging heavy loads along its narrow tunnels.

"You could have anything your heart desires and yet you ask to return to that miserable life!" the Queen exclaimed. *"Go back to your work and think hard before you enter my presence again."*

So, as she deftly twisted the metal and fitted the precious stones, Snow White thought long and hard. She thought of the sufferings she had shared with her friends in the distant mines; of how they and all the people of the land spent their whole lives working to make lovely things for the Queen of the Mountains while they themselves had barely enough to live on. And Snow White knew what she would ask for.

"I will make a jewelled belt so beautiful that the Queen will call me before her again," she thought and at once set to work.



"Well, Snow White," said the Queen as the girl stood before her throne a second time, *"you have had time to think. Tell me your heart's desire and I will grant it, for what you have made is more beautiful than anything in my treasure chambers."* As she spoke the Queen ran her fingers along the red and purple gems of the jewelled belt.

"Majesty," said Snow White, *"I have thought and what I ask for is this: take only what you need from the people of the kingdom and let them keep the rest so that they will no longer be cold and hungry and miserable."*

The Queen's eyes glittered with rage and her hand tightened on the jewelled belt, but when she spoke her voice was as sweet as honey.

"Snow White, if anyone but you had spoken such treachery, I would have ordered my soldiers to throw them from the walls of the castle onto the rocks below. But you have a rare skill and are young enough to change your thoughts. Come close and look in my mirror."

Snow White looked into the magic mirror and saw herself reflected there, but strangely. She was wearing working clothes and yet in the mirror she was dressed in a richly embroidered gown, pearls and rubies were entwined in her long hair and on her head was a golden crown.

"You see, Snow White," said the Queen, *"you could be a princess. Now go."*



Snow White went back to the workshop. She stood gazing out of the tiny window and thinking of how she had looked in the mirror, adorned with jewels and gold. Far below her she could see the daily procession of people carrying up the mountainside all the things they had made and must give to the Queen. Beyond them the green plain stretched out until it reached the distant hills. On the other side of the hills was the sea and Snow White's home. The words of a song which she and her friends used to sing when the long day's work in the mine was over came back to her mind.

Emerald's green but grass is greener
Sapphires pale beside the sea.
No jet as black as the wild night sky,
No ruby red
No ruby red
No ruby red as hearts which try to be free.

"What my friends long for is my heart's desire too," thought Snow White, *"but the Queen of the Mountains will never set us free."*

Soon the Queen summoned Snow White before her throne a third time.

"No flower in all my gardens is as delicately shaped as these ear-rings you have made," she said. *"What reward do you want?"*

"Nothing, Majesty," said Snow White quietly.

"Foolish girl!" cried the Queen, *"I know you are unhappy, yet you only have to ask and you can become a princess. Very well, you will continue to make jewellery for me, but from now on soldiers will stand guard at the foot of the tower where you work and unless you choose to be a princess you will never leave the tower again."*



The months passed by. Still Snow White remained alone in the tower and did not ask for her reward. Quiet and pale, she sat at her work, thinking and waiting.

When a whole year had passed Snow White looked from her tiny window and saw below, among the people toiling up the pathway to the castle, seven little figures carrying between them a heavy chest. It was her friends the dwarfs at last.

Snow White waited for the dwarfs to bring the chest of diamonds to the workshop but when the chest was brought in it was carried by some of the Queen's soldiers.

"The Queen has given orders that you are not to see your friends from the mine," said one of the soldiers. *"She is watching them in her mirror all the time they are here."*

"Please go back to the foot of the stairs and leave me alone," said Snow White in a sad voice. *"I will fill the glass jars with diamonds and put the empty chest outside the door."*

The soldiers did as she asked, for they liked Snow White and secretly admired her for daring to displease the Queen.

An hour later they returned and took the chest away, down the twisting stairway and into the courtyard where the dwarfs were waiting. The little men swung it onto their shoulders and carried it out of the castle gates and down the mountainside.

All that day the Queen of the Mountains sat on her throne and watched in her mirror as the dwarfs went further and further away. By the time that evening came they had crossed the distant hills. The Queen smiled to herself and asked the mirror her usual question:

"Mirror, mirror in my hand
Who is happiest in the land?

In its silvery voice, the mirror replied:

"Though all bow to your command,
Snow White is happiest in the land."

"Snow White!" hissed the Queen, *"Show me Snow White!"*

Then, in the mirror, she saw the seven dwarfs lifting the lid off the chest and out of the chest climbed Snow White, her face full of joy.

The Queen's rage was terrible. She ordered that the soldiers who had let Snow White escape were to be thrown from the castle walls. Throughout the night she sat on her throne speaking to no one. Then, as the sun rose, she gave orders to her soldiers.

"Go to the diamond mines," she commanded. *"Seal up the entrance while Snow White and her companions are working so that they will all die underground."*

Many of the soldiers were filled with horror but they dared not disobey. The Queen watched in her mirror as they sealed up the way out of the mine and when it was done, she laughed.

Word of the terrible thing done at the Queen's command spread quickly through the land. Many people came to where the Queen's soldiers stood guard beside the sealed up entrance to the mine. As the day wore on, more and more people arrived. They stood there quietly at a little distance from the soldiers, as if they were waiting for something to happen. By evening, a great crowd had gathered. They lit fires to keep themselves warm through the night and talked in low voices about all the people trapped underground and about the cruelty of the Queen of the Mountains. They knew that by now there must be very little air left to breathe down in the mine. Soon Snow White and her friends would be dead as the Queen of the Mountains had commanded.

Suddenly, among some rocks on the outskirts of the crowd, a tapping sound could be heard. As the people looked at each other in bewilderment, one of the rocks began to move and then was pushed aside from behind to reveal a narrow shaft going deep into the earth. Climbing from this passage was one of the dwarfs.

"Just in time," wheezed the dwarf. *"I do not think we could have gone on digging much longer. My oldest brother remembered that when he was very young there was another way out of the mine. He led us to the place and we dug in the dark until the way was opened up."*

One by one, helping each other, the workers from the diamond mine climbed out into the fresh night air. Some were faint, some were bruised and many had torn and bleeding hands, but every child, woman and man was safe. Among them was Snow White.

The great crowd of people round the fires and the soldiers stared in amazement. Then the people began to cheer. Some of the soldiers joined in the cheering but others drew their weapons. One of these called out to Snow White.

"Snow White," he ordered, *"you must come with us at once back to the castle."*

"No," answered Snow White, *"I will not go back to the castle and we will send no more diamonds to the Queen. Everyone will keep the things they make and send nothing to the Queen of the Mountains."*

As she spoke the cheers grew louder and louder.

"Then we will kill you," said the soldier.

"You may kill some of us," said Snow White, *"but in the end you will lose for there are far more people than there are soldiers."*

The people realised that this was true and they surrounded the soldiers determined to take their weapons from them, whatever the cost.

Far away on her marble throne, the Queen of the Mountains took the jewellery Snow White had made and broke it into pieces. In her magic mirror she could see all that was happening. She knew that the people of the land were rising up against her.

"Mirror, mirror in my hand
Make them bow to my command,"

she ordered her mirror. But the mirror answered:

"Queen who was so rich and grand
The people cast you from their land."

The magic mirror misted over and when the mist had gone, the Queen could see nothing reflected there but her own face.

Still grasping the mirror in her hand, the Queen of the Mountains rose from her throne and climbed the stone steps to the highest battlements of the castle. From there she could look out and see with her own eyes the crowds of people gathering on the distant plain. In fear and fury she lifted the mirror above her head and flung it from the castle wall.

The mirror would not leave her hand. She fell with it and hurtled screaming down and down until she was shattered into fragments on the rocks below.□

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Dear Spare Rib,
I'm writing to say how much I really like your magazine and look forward to buying it each month. However, I do have one grouse- why, oh why, do you continue to give up a whole page every month to telling us to subscribe, get our friends to buy it, libraries to stock it...etc? What a waste of space; I like to read the news of women's activities, how women are fighting back, new ideas and inspirations. Why not scrap that page!
Yours sincerely,
A Regular Reader

Dear Regular Reader

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Over the past four years we've learnt that new readers don't just 'happen'; other magazines, like *Woman,* can afford to advertise on television and buy space in national newspapers to attract new readers. *Spare Rib* just can't afford that kind of thing.

YOU buy *Spare Rib* each month but we know there are thousands of women who don't. We want to make sure that any woman who buys the occasional copy knows that she can do something to help; so that we can improve the magazine, advertise to reach new readers and give more space for your letters and articles, instead of this '*Spare Rib* depends on you' line!

Yours sincerely

Jane Prince
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20	Sure, I raped her'		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sure, I raped her'. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
20	2x drawings of frogs in underwear		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for 2x drawings of frogs in underwear. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
20	cartoon: Kerb-Crawler	Jools	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for cartoon: Kerb-Crawler. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Bristol shopping centre	West, Jackie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Bristol shopping centre. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Saving on our health		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Saving on our health. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Mother's Hospital to Close?	Sharpe, Sue	Usage Terms: © Sue Sharpe
21	Liverpool: Space on the Streets		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Liverpool: Space on the Streets. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
			Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Bristol: women handed

21	Bristol: women handed out ovr 1000 leaflets		out ovr 1000 leaflets. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	If it weren't for the Liverpool mums …		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for If it weren't for the Liverpool mums …. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	Rubbishy Excuse		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Rubbishy Excuse. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	A hundred mothers have started a campaign to stop nursery closure		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for A hundred mothers have started a campaign to stop nursery closure. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	on the Road: This month Eleanor and Stephanie visited Birmingham	Mazelan, Patti	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for on the Road: This month Eleanor and Stephanie visited Birmingham. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	Netherley Flat Dwellers on a recent tenants demonstration in Liverpool	Big Flame Photos	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Netherley Flat Dwellers on a recent tenants demonstration in Liverpool. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Beating the breadwinner	Cherrington, Clare	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Beating the breadwinner. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Housing in Glasgow: Paying off Your Husband's Debts	Hunter, Eveline	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Housing in Glasgow: Paying off Your Husband's Debts. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Lesbians and the Lord		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Lesbians and the Lord. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
24	poster for Women: stop mp's ripping up your right to abortion		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for poster for Women: stop mp's ripping up your right to abortion. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
			Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate

25	From The Shameless Old Lady		the copyright holder for From The Shameless Old Lady. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
25	woman wrapped up in a snake	Crezee, Marion	Usage Terms: © Marion Crezée
25	Women & Housing - A Guide for women to deal with the various options …		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Women & Housing - A Guide for women to deal with the various options …. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
26	Letter from a woman in South Africa	Clarke, B.	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Letter from a woman in South Africa. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
26	Rioting in Soweto, August 7	Gamma	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Rioting in Soweto, August 7. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
27	Visit to an Italian health Centre	Arnold, Marie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Visit to an Italian health Centre. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
27	Italian women	Continua, Lotta	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Italian women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	How Did Ulrike Meinhof Die?	Monte, Karin	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for How Did Ulrike Meinhof Die?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	Ulrike Meinhof		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Ulrike Meinhof. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	Visit to an Italian health Centre	Arnold, Marie	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Visit to an Italian health Centre. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	Poison: Price of an abortion		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Poison: Price of an abortion. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	France: Speak out on Rape	Brackx, Anny	Usage Terms: © Anny Brackx. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.

29	France: Speak out on Rape	Brackx, Anny	Usage Terms: © Anny Brackx. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
29	SW Area labour Party women's organisation sent a delegation to Parliament to lobby Tony Wedgewood Benn	Sturrock, John	Usage Terms: © John Sturrock. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
29	No compromise on child benefits		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for No compromise on child benefits. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
29	South Australia: Wives will be able to charge their husbands with rape		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for South Australia: Wives will be able to charge their husbands with rape. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
29	Fare Enough		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Fare Enough. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
32	Coming Out To My Mother	Wright, Julia	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Coming Out To My Mother. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
33	Why Not Slip into Something a little More Comfortable	Tickner, Lisa	Usage Terms: © Lisa Tickner
33	A picnic in crinolines		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for A picnic in crinolines. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
34	Why Not Slip into Something a little More Comfortable	Tickner, Lisa	Usage Terms: © Lisa Tickner
34	Revolted Women 1894		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Revolted Women 1894. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
34	cartoon from Punch 1846	Punch	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for cartoon from Punch 1846. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
34	Something more of a Bloomerism	Punch	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Something more of a Bloomerism. Please contact copyright@bl.uk

			with any information you have regarding this item.
35	Why Not Slip into Something a little More Comfortable	Tickner, Lisa	Usage Terms: © Lisa Tickner
35	painting of a woman leaning on a chair to view a painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for painting of a woman leaning on a chair to view a painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
35	women hiking	Illustrated London News	Usage Terms: Public Domain
36	Why Not Slip into Something a little More Comfortable	Tickner, Lisa	Usage Terms: © Lisa Tickner
36	women in masculine dress	Punch	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for women in masculine dress. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
37	Silbury hill		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Silbury hill. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
37	Women-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China	West, Kate	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Women-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
37	The Silbury Treasure by Michael Dames	Ades, Rose	Usage Terms: © Rose Ades
38	Kinflicks	Cherrington, Clare	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Kinflicks. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
38	Lesbian Images by Jane Rule	Roberts, Michele	Usage Terms: © Michele Roberts. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
38	possibly Lisa Alther author of Kinflicks		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for possibly Lisa Alther author of Kinflicks. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
38	Wakefield Tricycle Company Mind Music		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Wakefield Tricycle Company Mind Music. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.

39	4 photographs of Mary Kelly and her son		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for 4 photographs of Mary Kelly and her son. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
39	Lesbian Images by Jane Rule	Roberts, Michele	Usage Terms: © Michele Roberts. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
40	Margaux Hemingway and Anne Bancroft in Lipstick		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Margaux Hemingway and Anne Bancroft in Lipstick. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
40	What's happening to me by Peter Mayle and Arthur Robins		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for What's happening to me by Peter Mayle and Arthur Robins. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
40	from 'What's happening to me'		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for from 'What's happening to me'. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
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